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ABSTRACT

This series of one- and two-page abstracts highlights a variety of innovative approaches to teaching and learning in the community college. Topics covered in the articles include: the use of "trigger films" in group learning situations; letter writing as a means of maintaining group cohesion in a nontraditional classroom; creative grading; the use of "Innovation Abstracts"; instructional strategies for multilingual vocational education; interdisciplinary science-humanities courses; professional development for classified staff; improving student retention; the scoring of writing assignments; student feedback; the value of "reinventing the wheel"; cultural literacy; European study tours; critical thinking and valuing as basic skills; word processor use in composition courses; dropout prevention through expectancy value theory; academic advising; teaching and grading methods in business law classes; a competition for high school students; student persistence at Miami-Dade Community College (Florida); active learning; the "interactive errand" as an instructional tool for English as a second language; improving study skills; enhancing student creativity; Red Deer College's (Alberta, Canada) preceptorship program; teleconference extension courses; faculty development at Yukon College (Alaska); social science research projects; teaching the philosophy of success; conducting efficient meetings; qualities of outstanding teachers; computerized practice sets; and tandem testing. (LAL)

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin, EDB 348, Austin, Texas 78712

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS VOL. VIII NO. 1

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TRIGGER FILMS

. . .

CHAIR: Well, I'm sorry, that's just the way it is . . . I thought we could, uh, milk the dean for Bob and David for their highly visible efforts. Maybe we can do better for you in the future.
GEORGE: Hell, I'll be *retired* "in the future." Maybe you can give me a *gold watch*.
CHAIR: George, I am *doing* the *best* I can.
GEORGE: Well, *dammit*, you'd better do *better*, or you won't see much of me this year!
[George exits, slamming door.] [Freeze on close-up of Chair, still seated, rubbing back of neck. Cut.]

The above is the script for the final 30 seconds of "Money," a trigger film dealing with a confrontation about salary increments. George, a senior faculty member, has just learned that several younger members of the department received much larger increases than he, and he demands to know why. This excerpt actually represents about a quarter of the film. Short? Extremely so—trigger films are rarely as long as three minutes. Dramatic? Quite—many shots in "Money" are close-ups. Abrupt? Yes, life often comes to a head that way. Incomplete? Intentionally—the essence of a trigger film is its open-endedness. All of these are calculated to enhance the purpose of the film: to trigger feelings and reactions of the viewers.

This is one in a series of seven trigger films on college administration. They don't lecture, and they don't moralize. They were designed to permit department and program chairs to anticipate problems that might be encountered and to begin to develop strategies for coping with, or precluding them. Discussion about "Money" often focuses on questions such as these: Could the chair's decisions about salary be justified? What might have made George so irate? What are appropriate patterns for distributing limited resources? What are effective processes for determining and announcing salary increments? How can a confrontation such as this be resolved? How could it have been avoided? What would *you* do in this situation?

A trigger film (or videotape) can be useful in group learning situations because it is an effective way to focus the attention of the group and to maximize the involvement of the members in a discussion. The film and the feelings it generates are data input for the group; the interaction that follows is a processing of the data. It's a rather simple idea in concept, as well as in implementation.

A trigger film can do more than produce rapid entry into a discussion. When group members work first with a relatively unthreatening situation portrayed in a film, they often become more free to discuss parallel situations in their own lives. Since participants begin to use each other as resources, the technique facilitates movement of the teacher out of an authority role, which enhances learning in many circumstances.

Applications and Variations

Because a trigger film is so compact, the *production* of a trigger film can readily become the focal activity in a group's learning experience. In one notable instance of the learning effectiveness of this strategy, 40 public health workers in Texas produced five trigger tapes on smoking and health in a little over two hours. Production was accomplished with a portable on-camera system that could be handled easily by one person. The primary achievement was that the workshop members examined the parameters of smoking and health, developed increased awareness of exemplary health behavior, and in many cases came to firmer commitments themselves with regard to such behavior.

A program developed by the U.S. Army at Fort Knox is another practical example of a trigger film strategy at work. Video trigger tapes of problem racial situations were shown; the tapes end at the height of the critical moments for action or decision making. Viewers then played out the roles from that point and in the process explored and began to resolve some of their own tensions with regard to interracial relations.

Perhaps one of the more unusual variations in the application of trigger films occurred at the University of Kentucky College of Dentistry. In a curriculum that extensively employed self-instructional modules, Oral Biology faculty members observed that a relatively unvaried instructional diet sometimes contributed to student lethargy. Video trigger tapes related to the modules were programmed intermittently to rekindle motivation and interest and to stimulate discussion and interaction among students.

The preceding instructional strategies share one element in common: the use of a film or videotape to trigger viewer response and interaction. The interaction is the essential ingredient for learning; the film or tape is a highly effective means of bringing it about. Strategies for using trigger films are appropriate only if interaction among persons is an indicated method for achieving instructional goals. Some general examples of goals in this category are affecting attitudes, clarifying values, modifying perceptions, and generating commitments.

In a college or university setting, trigger film strategies might be applicable in areas where the primary focus is on problems and issues—for example, behavioral sciences, social professions, teacher education, and law. They may also be applicable in training for more effective interpersonal skills—interviewing, counseling, academic advising, patient relations. They may be employed for training in problem-solving and decision-making in management courses. These applications logically extend to possible uses in business and industry.

While trigger film strategies have wide applicability, they should be used judiciously in a mix with other instructional strategies. As important as when and why to use a trigger film is the matter of *how* to use it wisely: proper discussion management is important. A very good trigger film can be made completely ineffectual by imposing constraints, control, or evaluation on the interaction that develops from the film.

Development and Production

When examining trigger films and trigger tapes, one frequently finds certain characteristics: limited data presented, open-endedness, relative incompleteness, and an emotional aspect. These features are deliberately built into the film in order to generate rapid viewer involvement. The viewer quickly begins to work with the feelings and tensions that are being experienced, to hypothesize about missing data, and to look for interrelations among aspects of the situation in an attempt to construct a more understandable whole.

In the design of a trigger film, the primary consideration is identification of educational goals, as it is in any instructional problem. The next consideration is development of a situation that will generate attention to the area of the objectives. The point at which to enter the situation and the extent to which data can be omitted are both very significant, since brevity seems to heighten the impact of a trigger film.

Of all the decisions that are necessary in a trigger film production, the most critical is determination of where to terminate the film for optimal triggering of viewer interaction. Trigger film producers often ask themselves, "What immediate response do I want from the group when the film or tape ends?" Generally, closure is to be avoided. Alternatives and dilemmas may be posed, but the action should stop short of a decision. The idea is not to present solutions, but to create a context in which people explore ideas, examine alternatives, and reach their own decisions.

People frequently become interested in developing their own trigger films, but are concerned about the cost. It is true that a professionally-produced 16mm trigger film of a minute or two in length might cost several thousand dollars, but costs can be cut drastically by using videotape and producing on campus. As well, portable color cameras and editing equipment have become very sophisticated.

For the average academic department, which finds even a few hundred dollars to be a prohibitive expenditure, there are other alternatives. For many in-house purposes, satisfactory trigger films can be produced with 8mm film or black-and-white videotape, using portable equipment; film and tape costs are low, and not a great deal of time or experience is required. And the really creative person may be able to accomplish the same results with 35mm slides and synchronized audio tape for, perhaps, as little as $10. The ultimate in low-cost production is a "single-frame" triggering device: a carefully-chosen provocative photograph from a newspaper converted to a transparency for an overhead projector at a cost of a few cents.

The prime criterion for evaluation of a trigger film is: Does it trigger response? If it does, it will be successful. The choice of an instructional strategy is also a pragmatic one: will it accomplish the desired results? Trigger film strategies are often useful when the goals are behavioral and attitudinal changes brought about by group interaction. If this is what one is trying to achieve, then trigger films may be an innovation to consider.

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor
January 31, 1986, Vol. VIII, No. 2

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS VOL. VIII NO. 2

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KEEPING THE POSTMAN BUSY: REESTABLISHING THE GROUP IN A WEEKEND COLLEGE CLASS

Background

This past summer, one of our required English courses was offered in the non-traditional setting of the weekend college: six six-hour sessions on alternating Sundays, "the Super Six." Designed for non-English majors, this survey of literature, organized by *genre*, centers equally on reading and writing skills. Our intensive format attracts self-directed and energetic adults who range in age from thirty to seventy, who are employed full time, and whose employers reimburse tuition. The special task for a teacher is to deeply involve technical people with literature, an experience quite foreign to them, if not deemed useless by them for their daily endeavor.

Speedy Feedback By Mail

In addition to establishing individual purpose, it is necessary to maintain group purpose over the two-week interim. I achieved a growing commitment by asking that drafts of papers be mailed to me *before* the next meeting. I was able to respond to drafts with suggestions for revision, repost papers in time for students to act upon comments and to submit a final draft by our next meeting. On occasion the need arose for a phone or personal conference, usually at the beginning of the term. But only one such conference was needed to clarify course objectives and to enable the student to proceed in a confident manner.

Creating Positive Student Attitude

The impact of a teacher's personal contact and commitment to students' progress and success was, indeed, dramatic. Feeling that I was involved, they were involved. Knowing that I cared, they cared. So that these students in technical fields, so unused to literature, made the course their own: they traveled to NYC to see productions of plays we read (from Shakespeare to David Mamet). Some volunteered videotapes of plays for class viewing (Shakespeare and Athol Fugard). Peer group workshops on drafts became open and energetic. We worked, we trusted, and we enjoyed.

End-Of-Term Letter To Students

After the term's end, I could not help but write a "letter of appreciation" to each student. But it occurred to me that this final gesture was really an extension of the correspondent format already established. In the letter, I reiterated the goals of the course. Although a student may realize his individual and present achievement, articulating the larger goals enables him to widen his vision and purpose for future courses. I then thanked each of my fifteen students for his or her special contribution—be it offering videotapes, arranging a viewing room, seeing plays, reading drafts to the whole class, or adding a special brand of humor. The letter took on the feeling of a "roasting" but with the following pedagogical and administrative purposes in mind.

Objectives of Letter-Writing Strategy

- articulation of the learning objectives as a final affirmation of our purpose throughout the course
- affirmation of commitment not only to the task but to fellow students
- realization that learning integrates intellect and emotion
- establishment of bonds with the larger college community which, in turn, might encourage greater student retention

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CREATIVE GRADING
or
HOW I DECIDED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE MY GRADEBOOK

Most of us give grades for the same reason we go to the dentist—we fear the repercussions if we don't. Grades have become a form of self-protection. We use them to hide behind if an irate student storms into our office or if a curious administrator wonders what we're doing here. But can grades play a constructive role in the thinking/learning process?

On one hand, I must say no. When we attempt to grade a student's work, whether it be an essay exam or a mathematical process leading to an answer, we are forced into the position of making a judgment about the quality of another person's mind, his perceptions and understanding. To me, this notion of the teacher as judge is alien to the mutual learning environment I want to create. No matter how much we explain our grading policy and apologize for having to have one, grades are perceived by students much as we see our merit raises—as statements about our worth as productive human beings. This perception naturally creates barriers and forces the people on both sides into playing roles that, often, are antithetical to the community-of-learners ideal most of us want to encourage.

However, the unfortunate reality is that we have to give grades; so the problem is how we can make grades a constructive part of the course. During the past ten or so years that I have been teaching, I've tried ways to make grading as humane a process as possible. I've tried having students grade themselves and each other; I've tried avoiding giving grades until the end of the term; I've tried writing pages of comments rather than an actual grade; I've tried using various symbols and phrases to identify grade ranges rather than actual letter or number grades. But I've found that most of these approaches do more to increase grade anxiety than to decrease it. The question "How am I doing in this class" continues throughout the term; and my favorite reply, "You're asking the wrong person when you ask me," may please the Zen master, but not the student asking the question.

I've come to accept the unfortunate reality of grades. Since students see me as their evaluator (and since I am their evaluator) I now accept this role, and I include a grade—sometimes cleverly concealed in a paragraph or two of human response—whenever I read something that I assigned, be it an early draft of a paper or a final revision, an essay exam or a few-sentence response to the day's discussion or the previous night's homework. Different assignments bear differing credit, to be sure, but everything is graded.

Surprisingly, with this new approach the determination of a grade for a particular piece of work has become easier. I no longer agonize over whether a paper is a C+ or a B-, or how much credit to give a poorly written essay on a difficult or original topic when another paper, on a fairly simplistic issue, is written well. Since I now give so many grades on so many different drafts, I realize a particular grade just doesn't matter very much (although I don't dare say this to the student). In a sense, by giving so many different grades, I'm liberated from worrying about "standards" and whether or not a particular grade is fair when compared to other grades. I am free to use grades more creatively.

My new approach is based on the concept of grades as therapy. I can now give students the grade I think they need on a particular assignment to inspire more active involvement in the course. If I think a student needs a pat on the back, I feel free to give that student a higher grade than is "deserved" in order to build confidence. Sometimes I even ask a student who has not had much success to write a short summary of something he or she said in class in order to show an A for that student in my gradebook.

However, tempting though it is, I try not to use a lowered grade to shock a student who needs a kick rather than a pat. Students, like most of us, tend to work better in a positive, comfortable environment. If a student feels picked on or penalized by grades, he will stop learning out of spite; and out of the same spite, the instructor will enjoy playing judge and sentence the student to a lifetime with an F on his transcript.

Grades are potentially dangerous weapons. But since we have to use them, we need to find ways to make grades, if not helpful to the teaching/learning process, at least not harmful to it.

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor
January 24, 1986, Vol. VIII, No. 1

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS: CONTINUING THE PURSUIT OF TEACHING EXCELLENCE

NISOD evaluations of *Innovation Abstracts* attempt to measure the effectiveness of this publication—whether or not the topics are useful and if the dissemination strategy is working. In that regard, two questions in the evaluation survey are of particular importance: how are *Abstracts* distributed and how are they used by faculty and staff?

Distribution Strategies

From our last survey, we confirmed that distribution practices around the *Innovation Abstracts* are as diverse as the NISOD colleges themselves. The following are representative responses:

1. The most common practice is that of putting each issue of *Abstracts* in faculty mailboxes, usually by way of the secretary of each department/division. The NISOD contact at each college assumes responsibility for distributing the appropriate number to each *or* to the appropriate dean who distributes the issue to department/division chairs at the regularly-scheduled weekly meetings.
2. *Abstracts* are mailed to those faculty and staff requesting to be placed on the distribution list.
3. *Abstracts* are compiled in department/division notebooks and are available to all faculty and staff.
4. Bulletin boards in the faculty lounges and department/division offices display the most current issue.
5. The Faculty Association distributes the latest issue(s) along with its newsletter.
6. Least common was the practice, by the dean or the NISOD contact, of mailing only to those faculty who, in their estimation, would most likely be interested in the topic of the current issue.

Distribution frequently included part-time faculty and classified staff. Only one complaint was reported around distribution: that of insufficient numbers of copies for circulation to every full- and part-time faculty member, as well as classified personnel. While duplication of the *Abstracts* is permitted in member institutions, a growing number of colleges are electing to purchase enough copies weekly (for a very modest fee) to provide everyone an original.

Using *Innovation Abstracts*

We were interested in how faculty and staff used the *Abstracts*. These were the most frequent responses:

1. Regularly-scheduled brown bag sessions—informal gatherings around the noon hour—attract faculty and staff who wish to discuss the current issue. Discussions generated by the topic help identify current and potential implementation of similar innovations and spark innovation spin-offs.
2. Popular *Abstracts* help identify topics for formal staff development workshops, seminars, and programs.
3. Faculty share topics of potential student interest with their classes. [For example, many survey respondents reported seeing copies of "Attendance and Achievement" (Vol. VI, No. 30) taped to classroom doors.]
4. Many college-wide assessment/placement policies, writing-across-the-curriculum programs, and effective teaching strategies can be traced to especially popular *Abstracts'* issues.

In Summary

We learned that *Abstracts* is a useful and popular publication with faculty and staff in NISOD colleges. Furthermore, we discovered that *colleges providing strong institutional commitment to regular and personal contact with faculty and staff around Abstracts' topics reported high levels and broad acceptance of improved classroom strategies and teacher/administrator mutual support for teaching excellence.*

From the survey results, we identified several topics that readers hope to see in future issues; consequently, we have expanded the topical diversity—e.g., issues around the administration and instruction of technical/vocational courses and programs. We identified personnel whose needs and interests are infrequently addressed—e.g., classified staff; special attention has been focused on locating potential authors to address this group. (One such issue is in press—a successful staff development program for classified staff.)

Obviously, we look for quality material to share with our readers. We can only do that with help from those who recognize and engage in quality work. In that regard, we sound again the standing call for papers: call Suanne Roueche at 512/471-7545 to talk over any topic(s) around which you would consider preparing a manuscript, write or call to identify potential authors who might be persuaded to share their successful innovations, and/or submit a manuscript that you would wish to have considered for publication as an *Innovation Abstracts*. We find that our most popular issues are prepared by practitioners for practitioners!

The evidence is overwhelming that for *Innovation Abstracts* to be the most useful, *they must be methodically distributed to all faculty and staff on a regular weekly basis*! We intend to evaluate *Abstracts* again this year and look forward to your responses.

PROVIDING THE MISSING LINK

Linkages is NISOD's bimonthly newsletter for sharing member activities and other items of interest that foster teaching excellence. Currently, most of our news items come from college newsletters and news releases that we receive from approximately 25% of our more than 450 members. While we strive to mention different colleges in each issue, some are mentioned more than once a year; and others are never mentioned at all.

We need your help! Admittedly, this system allows us to touch only the surface of the teaching excellence and innovations on member campuses. We wish to strike a better balance in reporting and to keep *Linkages* a vital mechanism for informing and inspiring our members; therefore, we are taking this opportunity to encourage our *readers* to submit ideas and articles. It's the teachers, administrators, and classified staff "in the field" who know best how to describe a particular program or activity on campus, especially if it is a program or activity that would not likely be featured in one of the college's news publications. Please take a minute to read on and identify your college's potential contributions to *Linkages*.

A typical *Linkages* issue is divided into several departments:

PAGE 1. An in-depth article focusing on ways in which member colleges are responding to contemporary issues affecting their campuses. Recent issues have included such topics as student suicide, accessibility for the handicapped, rebirth of the humanities, and business/education partnerships. Potential articles might focus on meeting the needs of adult students, the international connection, assisting the underemployed and unemployed, and fighting illiteracy. ARTICLE LENGTH: 750-1000 words.

PAGE 2. FORUM FOR EXCELLENCE, generally an article by a "guest" columnist, highlighting an innovative response to a challenging teaching or leadership situation. ARTICLE LENGTH: 500-750 words. Page 2 might also include KUDOS, showcasing the accomplishments of member schools' teachers and administrators, such as involvement in a significant activity or election to a major organization. When space permits, this page might also include an inspirational brief article or quote.

PAGE 3. FIELD GEMS, concise articles that present overviews of innovative programs or activities, accompanied by the name, address, and telephone number of a contact person, and often illustrated with black-and-white photos that focus on one-to-one interaction. ARTICLE LENGTH: 200-300 words.

PAGE 4. LINKINGS are announcements of upcoming workshops, new publications, major grants awarded, and brief overviews of activities not selected for FIELD GEMS. Photos accompanied only by a caption and NISOD-related activities are also often included here. MAXIMUM LENGTH: 100 words.

In general, submitting any information that focuses on teaching and leadership innovation and is timely news about member activities is encouraged. When time does not permit you to write an entire article, we invite you to call or send a postcard indicating your article idea. We will interview you or the person involved and prepare the copy.

For more information about submitting material to *Linkages*, contact Susan Burneson, *Linkages* editor and designer, NISOD, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, 512/471-7545.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor
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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS VOL. VIII NO. 4

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INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVELY TEACHING A MULTILINGUAL VOCATIONAL CLASS

One of the greatest challenges to Houston Community College is that of providing educational services to Houston's ever-increasing limited-English-speaking population. An apparently bottomless job market, an appealing climate, and close proximity to Mexico have made Houston a mecca for immigrants and refugees from Latin America as well as other parts of the world. In addition to the Hispanic community which accounts for more than 10% of the city's population, there also are sizable numbers of newly arrived people from Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Poland, Russia, and Romania. With such a significant number of people in the community whose native language is not English, it is clear that an extra effort has to be made to provide these people with worthwhile training opportunities.

The most successful training programs we offer are those in which vocational training is offered concurrently with ESL instruction, and all instruction is given in the trainee's language at first. The ESL class deals only with communication skills required on the job, and the subject matter in the ESL class is based upon the material being covered in the vocational class at that time. As trainees become more fluent in English, the vocational instructor gradually increases the demands made on them to speak English in the vocational classroom. We find that this approach can be used to take a severely limited English speaker to employability in about the same time required to train a native English speaker in the same job skills. The key to the success of the program is quality communication between each student and the instructor. Therefore, unless the instructor is multilingual and materials are available in all of the different languages used by the students, the numbers who can be accommodated at any one time will be negatively affected. Chances of meeting these two instructional demands are not good.

Thus, the question, then, becomes: what can be done to provide services to students in a mainstream vocational classroom made up of speakers of a variety of languages when the instructor is monolingual English speaking and the instructional material available is not in the trainee's language?

Utilization of Outside Resources

The instructor must be able to utilize outside resources. In most institutions there are ESL instructors, a media department, and even individuals in the student body who would lend their expertise to the vocational classroom if only they were asked. It is not likely that the average vocational classroom will have instructional material available in foreign languages. The instructor will have to find ways of translating key lessons and safety procedures to ensure that they are mastered by the learner.

1. The best and cheapest source of these translations is found among *the students* who can usually be called upon to help, and it gives them a feeling of pride and accomplishment to demonstrate their knowledge of both English and their job skill. Most of the translations used in the Basic Air Conditioning Program at Houston Community College were done by students and ex-students.

2. In some instances, *other faculty members* can be called upon to assist in the translation of material. They might be instructors in language programs or simply people who have knowledge of some of the languages being used by students in the vocational class. Using other faculty is less effective than using bilingual students; instructors who have their own responsibilities and lack familiarity with vocational subject matter tend to require more time to produce usable materials.

3. Another means of obtaining translations is using bilingual or multilingual teacher aides. This is only possible in programs with high enrollment and/or a generous budget, and it is still difficult to find candidates for the position who speak more than one or two of the languages.

4. The vocational instructor or an ESL instructor can rewrite some of the more complicated job sheets and informational materials. Here we are assuming that the trainees have some grasp of the English language, however limited, and that the simplification of instructional material will allow more to be assimilated. The ESL faculty is the most appropriate resource for the rewriting of material because they are more likely to be familiar with obstacles that the limited English speakers must overcome. The ESL staff can also help with the design of learning activities which teach English and develop vocational skills and knowledge.

5. The media development center can be utilized extensively by a vocational instructor faced with the task of developing multilingual curriculum materials. There are many film strips available for English-speaking students that make use of an accompanying cassette recording. Simply having someone re-record the cassette in the target language provides professional quality visuals and an understandable soundtrack which the limited-English-speaking student can use. Transparencies can also be developed cheaply, and erasable markers can be used to include captions in the appropriate languages of the learners. This approach has the advantage of being adaptable to meet the differing needs of each new group of students.

A very useful instrument for preparing instructional materials in a variety of languages is the video camera and accompanying copiers and dubbing machines. A videotape can be produced by the instructor, using either students to carry out the procedures or demonstrating them him/herself. Copies of this tape can then be made with the sound dubbed in, using speakers of the target language instead of English. This approach provides the flexibility required of a frequently changing student body, and it is also relatively inexpensive once the equipment is acquired.

6. The vocational instructor must develop as extensive a library as possible of textbooks, pamphlets, and other training materials in languages other than English. Surprisingly enough, these materials are not very difficult to obtain. There are numerous booksellers who specialize in texts in other languages. There are also organizations who specialize in compiling and disseminating vocational materials, language training materials, and a wide variety of related information: evaluation, dissemination, and assessment centers; curriculum coordination centers in vocational technical education; The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (Rosslyn, Virginia); state vocational educational departments.

The teacher has a major responsibility to learn as much as possible about the cultures of the students who are attending the class. Different groups have unique ways of perceiving authority figures, different attitudes towards learning, and different expectancies of the instructor. They also have specific ways of viewing and dealing with other members of their own and other cultures and distinct ways of viewing the world which might affect their success in the classroom and on the job. For example, Orientals hold a teacher in such high regard that they won't ask any questions when they don't understand an instructor's English statement because they don't want to lose face. To counteract this problem, they must be encouraged to answer questions in class and be informed privately that these questions are being asked to help rather than make fun.

The material needed to effectively teach the major groups of limited English speakers found in our vocational classrooms is available to those instructors who are willing to take the time to seek it out. All that is needed is that little extra effort.

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor
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BRIDGING THE TWO CULTURES

Science touches everyone's life in modern society. But, as Rabelais wrote, "Science without conscience is the ruination of the soul." In the past thirty years, we have seen numerous social, ethics, and policy problems created by advances in biology, medicine, physics, and chemistry. Lagging behind the problems, but growing in the last ten years, has been an interest in the study of science and social values. Such studies have much to recommend them. They help to inform scientists of the broader social and moral implications of their work. They assist the non-scientist who may have to make decisions about the way science should be used. They require all students to examine their own value systems and to grapple with serious questions.

More than that, they help bridge the gulf C.P. Snow despaired of: "the two cultures" of science and humanities. Many science majors are understandably reluctant to take time away from their ever lengthier and more specialized training in order to take "liberal arts" courses, and few humanities majors voluntarily enroll in any course containing the word "science." So, in our schools, we have tended to widen this gulf.

Courses which combine science and humanities interests can be a successful way of bringing the "two cultures" together. The humanities student feels less intimidated, the science student more motivated by courses about the history or philosophy of science, atomic age problems, the social impact of technology, or science and social values. The "little bit of sugar" provided by the reassuring presence of some elements from his or her own field of study helps the medicine go down for each. These courses not only help prepare educated citizens and sharpen students' skills in critical thinking; but also have an immediacy in their subject matter which makes them attractive to a wide range of students. Such interdisciplinary, almost intercultural, courses seem particularly appropriate for community colleges.

Ethical Dilemmas and the Scientist

The Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges has a fund for Instructional Improvement, intended to encourage, among other things, the development of interdisciplinary courses and courses for honors students. Convinced of the importance and usefulness of a course which explored the problems of science and society, I applied for and received a grant in 1983-84 to develop and offer a course at Santa Barbara City College entitled "Ethical Dilemmas and the Scientist." The course would be an interdisciplinary honors course for students in the sciences, social sciences, and health professions. It would be an academically demanding seminar with extensive reading and preparation of a written research paper.

The proposal fit well with my college's efforts to develop instructional programs for students with ability for high academic achievement. The aim was primarily to acquaint the students with currently debated moral and ethical issues pertaining to the scientific community. Students would explore appropriate professional conduct for scientists, the legitimacy of certain research, conflict of interest between scientists and experts and advocates, the pressures created by the system of science funding, and dilemmas of personal conscience for scientists. A secondary aim would be to give bright, university-bound students more experience with the research, writing, and analytical reading they would face as upper division students.

An original group of twelve students was selected for the first course. Each had been recommended by a faculty member, and each had a conference with me which enabled both of us to assess whether he or she should take the class. All were doing well academically and were planning to continue their education beyond the community college. The twelve—six men and six women—represented the fields of engineering, physics, mathematics, political science, psychology, biology, geology, nursing, and history. But this balance was lost when students put together their schedules for spring semester; the course finally had only six students—all but one of whom were science and engineering majors and only one woman.

The Course

The scheme of the course was to examine a different category of problems each week. The class met for one two-and-a-half-hour session and one one-and-a-half hour session each week. The longer session was used to introduce the topic, the shorter session to round off the discussion and draw some conclusions. The students had read some background material—case studies, science news articles, editorials or speeches by involved scientists, or a treatment excerpted from a longer work. After the first few meetings the students asked for some assistance in what to look for in doing the reading, so study questions were provided each week thereafter.

In discussions, the major positions would be clarified and conflicting values identified. Students would suggest and discuss appropriate behavior or ethical guidelines. Although only a few of our weekly topics were in the area of bioethics, I used George Kieffer's *Bioethics: a Textbook of Issues* as a model for treating each topic. Guest lecturers and video presentations included: a workshop-lecture on techniques of interviewing; a speaker from Physicians for Social Responsibility; a biologist engaged in "genetic engineering"; an environmental ethicist who specialized in risk-benefit analyses of nuclear power plants; taped NOVA programs on genetic engineering and on informed consent in medical experiments.

Training Students in Research

Although the course was entitled "Ethical Dilemmas and the Scientist," an important goal was to help train the students to do research papers in general. To meet this aim, early in the semester, one of the college reference librarians gave the class a lecture on library research. She also arranged for the students to have a special lecture-demonstration by a Science-Engineering librarian at the University of California, Santa Barbara, on computer searches as a research tool. A presentation by one of UCSB's Government Documents staff on how to locate useful information in the myriad of available government documents rounded out the introduction to doing research. Every paper was different and served an individual educational purpose.

Course Evaluation

At the end of the semester, over a "farewell banquet," the students and I discussed the merits and weaknesses of the course. Whereas the students' evaluations of the course indicated their satisfaction with the cognitive skills they had developed, I considered the affective results to be especially important. Both they and I mentioned a number of ways the course needed to be improved: shorter, individually-assigned reading assignments; starting the course with some specific cases and moving to more philosophical readings on ethics at the end instead of at the beginning; preparation of a reader for the course so that each student could have a personal copy; recruiting more humanities students; injecting more "pro and con" discussions on controversial material; doing all the library presentation as early in the term as possible; making greater use of the wide and valuable experiences of the college's faculty.

An unplanned reward was the sense of camaraderie developed by the students. They began to work as a small community, aided unintentionally by the need at times to pass readings around when there weren't enough copies for everyone. The discussions enabled students to get to know more of each other's beliefs and experiences. Each student had to lead the discussion once in the semester; and on these occasions, the other students visibly tried to help the discussion along to make it easier for the leader. In addition, the students briefly described their research topics to the group at the fourth week of the semester and from then on would watch for useful material for each other. At mid-semester, they met on a Sunday to share difficulties they were having and get reactions to their written work.

In conclusion, the course proved to be successful in its goal of enhancing the general education of both humanities and science students. Students broadened their acquaintance with the different perspective of the other "culture." The prospective scientists and engineers became more aware of how difficult it was to work with questions whose answers are not easily arrived at through the application of straightforward logical rules. The non-science student gained some understanding, albeit limited, of what scientists do and found that, contrary to a popular image, a number of scientists are disturbed about the social and moral implications of their work and have done much soul-searching. The course helped prepare students to judge the merits of scientific ideas and claims to scientific authority when used to vindicate or criticize practices in American society at large. Through the assigned readings, the students learned a bit about the methodology and much more about current controversies in a range of scientific disciplines with social implications. They strengthened skills in writing and in logical analysis of the issues studied. Especially important was the fostering of independent and critical attitudes in the students by examining issues for which rote answers and memorization simply would not serve.

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CLASSIFIED STAFF

How important is the quality of classified staff and its subsequent growth and development to the success of a college? Jefferson Community College in Louisville, Kentucky, has answered that question with an on-going commitment of a planned development program for secretaries, clerks, and maintenance workers.

The college-wide Faculty/Staff Development Committee was formed in 1975; and from the beginning, classified staff representatives have been included in its membership. Presently, 4 of the 17-member committee are classified staff. We have a voice in the allocation of professional development funds, plan and approval of the calendar of activities, and serve as a sub-committee to implement programs designed specifically for classified staff. These have included workshops and seminars on such topics as: "Computer Use," "Word Processing," "Time Management," "Dealing With Angry Students," "Classified Staff Role in Student Advising," "Effective Written Communication," "Assertiveness for Classified Staff," "First Aid," "CPR," "Personal Security," and for the Maintenance and Operations Department, "Heating and Air Conditioning" and "Blueprint Reading."

For the past several years Faculty/Staff Development has included at least one all-day classified staff seminar with luncheon, speakers, and group activities. Our seminars are held off-campus because these sites provide us with an opportunity to concentrate on the topics without telephone interruptions, drop-ins, etc. This is the most popular activity of the year and is a valuable opportunity to get to know new staff and to strengthen relationships with those we do not work with closely. In May, 1985, our seminar focused on student advising and the important role that classified staff play in that process. Our Associate Directors (Academic Deans) helped us define our role by broadening the concept to include the giving of accurate information and making proper referrals (with emphasis on *accurate* and *proper*). The social setting enhanced the effectiveness of their presentation. Meeting face-to-face and learning exactly what our fellow staff members do gave us firsthand knowledge of resource people for information and referrals. When we direct a troubled or confused student to a person, by name—or better yet, call ahead for him/her—we personalize the advising system for the student.

Although the full committee utilizes a needs/interests survey each year in program planning, we of the classified staff conduct additional informal surveys of our own by listening to our peers wherever we see them—in the mailroom, on campus, or in the parking lot. Several of these "informal conversations" have resulted in a classifed staff *Handbook*, a looseleaf notebook containing up-to-date information on college policies and procedures every classified staff member needs to know, as well as examples of all college forms currently in use.

There have been other tangible results from classified staff professional development activities. The compilation of suggestions from a workshop on telephone techniques led to the publication of a booklet, *Jefferson Community College . . . May I Help You?*. Its 32 points on classified staff responsibility emphasize consistency and courtesy and offer specific ways of handling various situations. One, for example, reminds us that, "If you must place a caller on hold, explain what you are going to do and why; then check back with him/her frequently so he/she will know you have not forgotten the call or disconnected it." Another suggests that, "When a caller is nasty or profane, simply say, 'Let me transfer you to my supervisor' or 'I'm sorry, I cannot continue this conversation if you insist on using that kind of language'." The telephone pamphlet is a source of pride for the staff because they themselves are the authors who generated the ideas.

The Director (CEO) of our college, Dr. Ronald J. Horvath, wrote these words as an introduction to the pamphlet:

> *Jefferson Community College . . . May I Help You?* is the product of twenty-one members of the classified staff who met in small groups (i.e., mini-think tanks) to pinpoint practical suggestions for telephone procedures and courtesy. This pamphlet is particularly important when one realizes that the telephone is the PRIMARY LINK with the general public and that classified staff are an essential part of that link. The suggestions contained in this pamphlet may be self-evident to the reader, but all of us need to be reminded of our communication responsibilities.
>
> Through the direct contributions of the classified staff, we have again demonstrated that we (faculty *and* staff) are our own best resource in creating a positive working and learning environment.

When the Jefferson Community College *Institutional Values* pamphlet was being written, classified staff were invited to contribute in mini-sessions similar to those held with faculty and administrators. Our ideas were then submitted to the draft committee. A careful reader of the final published pamphlet will discover that it includes some of those values and behaviors suggested by classified staff, such as, "be warm, friendly, and helpful." But in a broader sense, the *Institutional Values* pamphlet re-emphasizes what the college is, what our purposes are, and how all of us fit into the educational process. For example, two of the value statements, directed toward faculty and staff relationships, remind us . . .

> that effective communication and cooperation among faculty and staff are necessary to fulfill the mission of the college
>
> that the college is responsible for providing professional development activities for faculty and staff

Classified staff professional development at Jefferson has covered a wide range of activities, many of which are directed to all segments of the college. These include regularly scheduled book reviews (a memorable one, *Recent Works on John F. Kennedy*, January, 1985) and wellness and physical fitness activities. However, projects which allow classified staff members to find their own solutions to common problems and to participate in the discussion of the overall purposes and values of our institution are a special stimulus to professional growth. They encourage mutual appreciation and cooperation, increase the sense of pride in our work and our institution, and make us feel we are a vital part of the professional team.

Dorothy Poole and Anna Roberts
Division Secretaries
Jefferson Community College

The pamphlets, *Jefferson Community College . . . May I Help You?* and *Institutional Values* are available without cost by writing Dorothy Poole, Division Secretary, Allied Health Division, Jefferson Community College, P.O. Box 1036, Louisville, KY 40201.

For further information, contact the authors.

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FROM JUST IN CASE TO JUST-IN-TIME

Just in case

Just in case the economy needs trained people, our colleges and technical institutes produce a huge batch once or twice a year. We take in more students than we can handle in a program just in case some drop out. We give them courses they do not need for foot-in-the-door training just in case a small number of them might remember some of it a few years later. And we graduate them just in case there is something that they can do with their training. Still later, we evaluate the program just in case it is doing something other than what it is supposed to be doing.

Even when many of our graduates fail to obtain employment, we continue to produce batches of them just in case things get better. We even have a name for that: *counter cyclical training*. We may not be certain why our graduates fail to get jobs and may not even want to know, but just in case it is the economy—and not the program—we maintain production.

For example, college X registers 50 students each year in a two-year program to train Resilient Flooring Technologists. Most of the graduates in this program have obtained jobs in the field. However, in a follow-up study of the 1984 graduates, it was found that only four of them obtained jobs for which they were trained. By January, 1985, college X found out why. A major technological development had reduced the demand for Resilient Flooring Technologists by 90%. However, the college had nearly 50 students in the second year of the program and 50 who had just started the first. What would college X do? It is almost certain that both the first and second year groups in the program would continue as if nothing had changed. And it is more than likely that a new group of 50 would be admitted to the program for fall, 1985. Just in case.

This kind of system is inefficient and ineffective, but many argue that it is acceptable because learning is intrinsically good. However, it is not only uneconomic; it is unethical. When Ford or Phillips build too many cars or television sets, inventory increases. If inventory builds up too much, firms go out of business (or, if the company is big enough, it is rescued by the government). Two-year institutions have unsold inventory too. The difference is that we do not have to worry much about whether our inventory gets hired. Our graduates disperse: some get jobs; some do not. We continue to produce more.

Some will be exercised over classifying graduates as inventory and will read it as evidence of an inhumane approach. But what is more inhumane than continuing to graduate people in a training program when there are few if any jobs? Call them unsold inventory or God's children: our system treats them like commodities.

Some will argue that education is an end in itself, and this justifies our system. If it is liberal education that is being discussed, indeed that is a persuasive case. However, with the exception of the CEGEPS in Quebec and a few programs in other provinces, the *primary* mandate of the two-year institution is not education and particularly not liberal education: it is training. Students do not come to two-year institutions to learn as an end in itself. Most of them did that for twelve years in school, and they attend two-year institutions to obtain marketable skills. As a test, ask yourself how many students stay at two-year institutions any longer than they have to. Compare that to the number you know who appear to have been going to university for decades.

Just a moment

The major developments for two-year institutions in Canada took place in the 1960s. The economy was expanding, the baby boom was overheating the universities, and governments seemed to think they had lots of money. Whole systems of colleges and technical institutes were launched and initially almost every program was two years long, whether registered nurse or clerk typist, just in case this was appropriate. This fit the times. Just in case probably worked because the economy was creating jobs fast enough to absorb the annual batch of graduates.

The world is very different now. The number of young people entering the work force will decline each year for the next decade, and few new jobs will be created. Of those who will be working in 1990, 90% are *already* working. The need for retraining has become obvious even to the most insular and institutionalized. However, like the smoker who reads the cancer studies and then lights up another cigarette, our institutions may know at the periphery that the era of retraining has arrived but the centre still emphasizes training.

Ignore the written goals of an institution. The real goals of the institution are in the budget. Ask what proportion of the budget of any two-year institution is allocated to retraining activities and functions. Nevertheless, as the everything-is-possible years of the 1960s led into the everything-is-off 1970s and on to the anything-can-be-cut 1980s, two-year institutions began to adapt. While the basic just-in-case system continued, increasing questions were asked about the market legitimacy of programs.

The result was invariably an elaborate solution: extensive planning operations with economists, statisticians, and bureaucrats of every hue, monkish in their dedication to revealed truth, determining exactly how many vibration technicians are currently working in Ontario and how many will be required in Thunder Bay in May, 1989. These planning departments are good at counting but fanciful at projecting. They can add up how many are currently working but, if truth be told, they do not know whether *any* vibration technicians will be needed in 1989, much less how many in Thunder Bay. Projecting job demand beyond a year or so relies on too many assumptions to be much advanced over tea leaf reading.

If we cannot accurately project job demand in 1989 or 1990, how can we move our ponderous organizations into position to respond to business and industry at that time? The answer is contained in the question. We do not know how to get there at the same time as they do, but we could arrange to follow them all the way there. We could reinvent our organizations and our development and delivery of programs so that they are responsive and adaptive.

Just-in-time

Just in case is a system where students are pushed through the system independently of whether there are jobs available or not. Just-in-time is based on an entirely different premise. Instead of developing elaborate systems to see whether the just in case batch system will meet future needs, the two-year institutions would produce just what is needed in time for the next step, which is turned to produce just in time for the next, and so on. Just-in-time training would produce graduates not on speculation but, instead, on the basis of jobs. Just-in-time pulls students through the system on the basis of real rather than potential jobs.

This is a dramatically different view of training and of how training organizations operate. Rather than commit ten man years to ascertain how many cellular radio technologists will be needed in 1990 so that we can get started planning in 1985 for program launch in 1988, a system is developed to produce whatever number of cellular radio technologists are needed just-in-time for employers to put them to work.

This will obviously mean two things: improved program development strategies and revamped delivery mechanisms. Diploma programs currently take one to three years from idea to implementation and then two more years until the first grads emerge. The development time could be cut from years to weeks and the program delivered in a series of short-time blocks of one topic at a time. This would allow easy movement between work and study and would allow colleges to integrate training and retraining in one delivery model.

As for delivery, programs which have one entry point for incoming students and one exit point for graduates two years later are obsolete. A system which allows for short concentrated periods of study which can be taken consecutively or with alternating periods of work is an imperative in the era of retraining. The batch system has been convenient for educators but a problem for graduates and for employers. We need to cede some of our convenience and develop a system which will produce a continuous flow of graduates or at least many exits per year. We must be able to increase or decrease this flow on short notice.

Nearly two decades after its emergence as a major sector of education in this country, it is time to reinvent the community college. The concept of just-in-time has obvious utility in this process.

John S. Scharf, Chairman, Development Division
Kelsey Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences

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TURBOCHARGING THE SCORING OF WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

During the Spring 1985 Semester, the Staff Development Committee of Ventura College offered a program entitled, Writing Across the Curriculum. Faculty from the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences participated in presentations and workshops over a four-week period. The activities were designed to give insight and experience into the educational benefits of having students learn course material through structured writing assignments. During the program, a concern was expressed by participants: increasing the number of writing assignments or introducing them into a course would result in a greater commitment of instructor resources just when resources were diminishing.

This concern led to a procedure for speeding up or turbocharging the scoring process. First, scoring criteria were established: scoring has become more consistent, and the criteria have eliminated the need to reread papers. Second, the students were given a copy of the criteria: they have a stronger sense of what is expected and submit better papers that can be read faster.

The criteria developed and used by program participants in their classrooms follow: note that the criteria assign primary importance to course content and secondary importance to language usage. The criteria are easily modified to include the requirements for illustrations, charts, diagrams, etc.

A RATING SCALE FOR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS WHICH FOCUS ON COURSE CONTENT

Letter Grade	**Criteria**
A	The answer shows a superior understanding of the topic. The written response: (1) presents factors of central significance and explains them with substantial factual detail; (2) clearly shows how these factors operate; (3) has structure and mechanics which serve content.
B	The answer demonstrates an accurate grasp of the topic. The response: (1) presents important factors and explains them with appropriate specifics; (2) shows less detailed knowledge and less synthesis than the A paper; (3) has structure and mechanics which usually serve content.
C	The answer demonstrates an acceptable but commonplace understanding of the topic. The response: (1) presents important factors but explains them with only the most obvious specifics; (2) delineates only the most obvious implications; (3) has structure and mechanics which may cause the reader minor distractions.
D	The answer demonstrates only limited understanding or a partial misunderstanding of the topic. The response: (1) may use unimportant factors or may explain important factors or their significance with little coherence or specificity; (2) may make a number of serious factual errors; (3) has structure and mechanics which sometime impede the reader's understanding.
F	The answer demonstrates little or no grasp of the topic. The response: (1) may significantly misstate facts or misinterpret them; (2) may fail completely to justify the choice of factors; (3) may be a string of generalizations without specifics or specifics without generalizations; (4) has structure and mechanics which may cause the reader significant difficulty.

Thomas A. McDannold
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ATTABOYS, WARM FUZZIES, AND THE GOLDEN GLOW

How do you get that extra effort that makes a good school into a great one? Use the combination of "attaboys, warm fuzzies, and the golden glow." In today's shortage of educational finances, the paucity of discretionary monetary funds is too quickly evident. Salary raises are often more symbolic than significant. Yet educators need the positive stroke of the reward. So unless the recipients are starving, these *magic words* can mean more: "thank you," "good work," "I appreciate it," or simply "attaboy." When accompanied by the pressing of the flesh (handshake, pat on the back), these simple words can work small miracles.

But how do you know where and when to use the *magic words*? As for the where, you must distinguish between good work and just getting the job done—that's called "the deserving concept," and on it rests the honesty of your "attaboys." Don't broadcast these good "attaboys" like grass seed; be selective, as in planting potatoes! But when in doubt, use them. As for the *when*, find out who's doing good work and *distinguish* between "doing the work" and "getting credit for the work done." Plug your ear into the socket of what's being done, and reward your source with a verbal "attaboy." Actions that bring pleasure are repeated; an "attaboy" is gratifying, and soon you'll be kept more knowledgeable about the good work in your institution.

Then there is the "written attaboy."

> Mrs. Flitzboomer just told me of your extra effort in building the SQUARM system, and I thank you for your time and originality in this matter. Your work has made this a better school!

You should acknowledge the person (Mrs. Flitzboomer) who sent you the original information! It'll send nice "warm fuzzies" between those two people, and both will feel more positive about you. Time involved? Three minutes of long hand, two minutes at a word processor, or thirty seconds of dictation.

Need a higher level of "attaboy"? Try the written letter of commendation, couched in more formal terms, with the original placed in the personnel folder. You can use it in letters of recommendation or promotion, and the recipient should be told about it. Cost? A little higher than the written "attaboy" because you're using letterhead paper and a carbon instead of your scratch pad.

For higher motivational tools, let your mind really reach: small plaques to hang on office walls, complete with notices to the local newspaper; public accolades at school dinners, graduations, and other events. Choose these recipients carefully, make these "big" and "super attaboys" public, and make them special! Now you're spreading the "golden glow."

Any classroom instructor who has thrown away his red grading pen (*red* says *anger*) and picked up a soft green or blue one has taken the first tiny step. After a good answer, give the student a written "good work" or, better still, an "attaboy." If that's too much trouble, use a cheap rubber printing stamp! Paste a gold star, just like in grade school. If the action is deserving, make the motion.

Administrators to deans, faculty to students—does the "golden glow" have to be vertically descending? Not at all. It works about as well on the horizontal level, for here's where the spoken and touching "warm fuzzy" can most immediately brighten a day.

An "attaboy" or a "warm fuzzy" is as easy as reaching for your memo pad and green pen. With your leadership, a class, or a department, or an entire college can develop the "golden glow."

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ON THE VALUE OF REINVENTING THE WHEEL

When I first joined the League for Innovation in 1975, one of my first tasks was to become acquainted with the member colleges. During that first year, I visited thirty-five campuses, spending one or two days on each, meeting staff members, touring facilities, and holding sessions with those interested in the League. After my visit to four or five campuses, I began assuming a role as a carrier and catalyst for innovative ideas. I realized that I was stocking up on the cutting edge notions from each of the campuses I visited, and I thought I could be of great service to other campuses by sharing those ideas and helping to develop networks among staff members who were dealing with similar topics and issues.

During my visits to the next five or ten colleges, I attempted to share ideas I had discovered on other campuses and encourage communication among interested parties. When reviewing a new idea on one campus, I was often quick to respond, "You will be pleased to know that staff members at x-community college are also developing a similar program, and they are trying some approaches in which I know you will be interested." The response to my enthusiasm for connecting ideas was more often than not met with passivity, and in some few cases, scorn. When I examined what was happening, I came to realize that the great educational truism, "We do not believe in reinventing the wheel," was not universally ascribed to by my colleagues.

In higher education generally, and in community colleges particularly, great allegiance is paid to the concept of not reinventing the wheel. It is one of the more basic truisms associated with the culture of education. I have never heard anyone in our field openly disagree with the basic concept. And yet, in my experience, I find many people disagreeing with the basic concept in their actual behavior.

There is probably something innately human about wanting to make one's own wheel. "This is my wheel; it is unlike any other wheel in the universe; I am proud of my wheel." The dynamics of this sentiment are powerful indeed and probably underscore the oft-repeated behavior of reinventing the wheel on our campuses. There apparently *are* values associated with the process of reinventing the wheel, some of which are expressed as follows:

1. *I take ownership of the wheels I reinvent.* Adapting someone else's wheel to my situation may cost less in time, energy, and funds, and the final product may be better designed; but it is still someone else's wheel. The wheel I have shaped for my college, for my classroom, is my wheel; and I own it. It reflects my own idiosyncracies, my own needs, my own style. It also reflects my special understanding of the way my college works and of what my own students need. It is a tailor-made wheel for the special circumstances in which I live and work. And because I care enough to fashion this wheel for my environment, there is a chance that it is a better wheel than any I can adapt. In any case, it is my wheel and therefore an extension of me, a part of me that I give to my college, to my students. The kind of commitment I have to my own wheel probably adds a great deal to making me a better staff member, making me a better teacher.
2. *The process of reinventing the wheel is a process that makes me feel creative and good about myself.* I know that other wheels exist. I know there are packages of software for the courses I teach and the programs I manage. I know that other community college practitioners have designed documents, approaches, and methodologies that would probably work fairly well for my campus or for my students.

   But I do not want to see myself simply as an adaptor of other people's materials. I am a creative and innovative teacher and administrator, and I want to mess around with my own stuff. I want to challenge my own intelligence; I want to explore my own creativity; I want to design innovations that come out of me. My ideas are just as good as anyone else's; and if I don't have a chance to exercise them, I will be reduced to a copycat.

Teaching and administering are creative processes, and that is why I am attracted to the profession. This is a profession that encourages me to be creative and even allows me opportunities to be so. If that takes the form of reinventing the wheel, then that is the way I am creative.

3. *When I reinvent wheels, I learn from my own mistakes.* When I try to adapt the wheels of others to my college or to my classroom, it is easy to blame them for the difficulties I experience. It is easy to criticize the way they have designed the wheel, the language they have used, and the effectiveness with which it gets the job done.

   When I reinvent my own wheel, I have to take responsibility for it, and it gives me a chance to correct my own mistakes. If the wheel isn't quite right, then I take responsibility for whittling it down or aligning it differently. Since it is a product of my creativity, and since I take full ownership of it, it is well known to me and not so threatening. And since it is not threatening, I am freer to learn the mistakes I have made in designing and developing it.

4. *I take great pride in my reinvented wheel.* In fact, I am not sure there ever was a wheel like the one I have made. I do not even think in the language of "reinvention." For me, my wheel is a first invention; I am proud that I have made it.

   As I said, I know that others have invented wheels similar to mine; but mine is the only one I have ever invented, and it is the only one of its kind for me. I need to take pride in my work, and I need to help students and my colleagues take pride in the work they do. Making my "original" wheel gives me great pride and encourages me to develop that pride in others.

And so, I have come to realize that there is value in reinventing the wheel. Something there is in human nature that makes the process of reinventing the wheel a very personal and important one. One could do worse than to be a reinventor of wheels.

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CULTURAL LITERACY

A few years ago I was conducting some experiments to measure the effectiveness of a piece of writing when it is read by real audiences under controlled conditions. One memorable day my experiment took me to some students at a community college, and my complacency about adult literacy was forever shattered! This community college was located in Richmond, Virginia, and you will grasp the irony of the location in a moment. Our first experiments went well, because we started out by giving the students a paper to read on the topic of "friendship." When they were reading about friendship, these students showed themselves, on average, to be literate. But that changed with the next piece of writing that we asked them to read. It was a comparison of the characters of Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee, and the students' performance on that task was, to be blunt about it, illiterate. Our results showed that Grant and Lee simply were not familiar names to these young adults in the capital of the Confederacy!

Shortly after having that disorienting experience, I discovered that Professor Richard Anderson of the Center for Reading Research in Urbana, Illinois, and other researchers in psycholinguistics throughout the world had reached some firm conclusions about the importance of background knowledge in reading. For instance, in one experiment Anderson and his colleagues discovered that an otherwise literate audience in India could not properly read a simple text about an American wedding. But by the same token, an otherwise literate audience in America could not properly read a simple text about an Indian wedding. Why not? It wasn't a matter of vocabulary, or phonics or word recognition; it was a matter of background knowledge, of *cultural* literacy. Anderson and others have shown that to read a text with understanding one needs to have the background knowledge that the author has tacitly assumed the reader to have. Back in the 18th century, when mass literacy was beginning to be a reality in Great Britain, Dr. Johnson invoked a personage whom he called "the common reader" as the possessor of the background knowledge that a writer can tacitly assume readers in the larger culture to have. Similarly, in present day America, the common reader needs to have what I am calling "cultural literacy" in order to read general materials with understanding. Research has shown that this background knowledge is a fundamental requirement for meaningful literacy.

To give you an example of the need for cultural literacy, I shall quote a snippet:

> A federal appeals panel today upheld an order barring foreclosure on a Missouri farm, saying that U.S. Agriculture Secretary John R. Block has reneged on his responsibilities to some debt ridden farmers. The appeals panel directed the USDA to create a system of processing loan deferments and of publicizing them as it said Congress had intended. The panel said that it is the responsibility of the agriculture secretary to carry out this intent ' not as a private banker, but as a public broker. ' (*The Washington Post*, December 29, 1983, p. A-13)

Imagine that item being read by persons who have been trained in phonics and so on, but who are culturally illiterate. They might know words like "foreclosure," but they would not understand the text as a whole. Who gave the order that the federal panel upheld? What is a federal appeals panel? Even if culturally illiterate readers bothered to look up individual words, they would not have much idea of the reality being referred to.

Thomas Jefferson said that he would prefer newspapers without government to government without newspapers. He thought that the very concept of American democracy, depending as it does on all citizens having a vote, requires an informed citizenry and universal literacy. On Jefferson's principles, we might venture this definition of the background information that an American citizen ought to have in order to be truly literate: It is "the background information required to read serious American newspapers and magazines with understanding." This knowledge would include political, proverbial, historical, and scientific information as part of the general background knowledge that I am calling "cultural literacy."

One reason that we as a nation have hesitated to make a collective decision about the background knowledge that Americans should know is that we object to such decisions being dictated to us from on high. We govern our schools through more than twenty thousand independent school districts, each of which decides or fails to decide such matters for itself, and which imposes or fails to impose its decisions on students and teachers. But despite this diversity in our schools, there is nonetheless an unstated body of information that is assumed by writers of books, magazines, training manuals, and newspapers. They assume, they *must* assume, a "common reader" who knows the things that are known by other literate persons in the culture.

But to an illiterate adult who is unaware of what literate persons are expected to know, such assumptions by writers could be regarded as a conspiracy of the literate against the illiterate, for the purpose of keeping them out of the club. Although newspaper reporters, writers of books, and the framers of the Verbal SAT test necessarily make assumptions about the things that literate persons should know, no one ever announces what that body of information is. So, although we Americans object to pronouncements from on high about what we should know, writers and other people in influential positions necessarily assume that there is a body of information which literate people do know. And this creates a kind of *silent* dictating from on high about the things adults should know in order to be truly literate.

Some decades ago there appeared in Britain a charming book called *1066 and All That*. It dealt with facts of British history that had been learned by every British schoolchild, but which had become scrambled and confused in the adult mind. The book was hilarious to Britons, because their memories were not quite as vague and scrambled as the versions of history presented in the book. These Britons knew all too well that their school knowledge had become vague with the passage of time, but, of course, this forgetting of minor details didn't make them less literate than they had been as children. Background information of the sort that is needed for true literacy is neither detailed nor expert information, though it is accurate in its outlines.

In our own country, Noah Webster's language publications starting in 1783 and culminating in the great *American Dictionary of the English Language* of 1828, were declarations of cultural and linguistic independence that reflected our independent nationhood. Webster was the George Washington of American literacy; his *American Spelling Book* alone sold 60 million copies before 1890. He was shrewdly conscious of the connections between language-making, culture-making, and nation-making. Because of Webster, and other educators who thought as he did, the teaching of literacy in America was, early on, a repository not only of our national language, but also of national traditions, facts, and values.

In contrast to this early American practice of imparting nationally shared traditions along with instruction in reading and writing, we encounter the more recent practice of teaching literacy as a set of technical skills. There is enough truth in the idea that literacy is a set of transferable skills to make such educational formalism a respectable, if inadequate, theory to hold. But it should be added that in recent times this skills approach has also been a safe theory to hold. Specialists in reading and writing who adopt the skills approach needn't commit themselves to any particular contents or values, except the values of so-called "pluralism." They can present themselves as technicians who remain above the cultural battle. This posture of neutral expertness is nowhere better illustrated than in the official curriculum guides of certain states (for instance, the state of California) which mention, as do these so-called "curriculum guides," no specific contents at all. In earlier days, American educators carefully combined the technical skills of reading and writing with background knowledge, that is to say, with the acculturative side of literacy teaching. But in our own day, after fifty years of the skills-approach, and despite the advances we have made in reading research and in educating the disadvantaged, we find a decline in SAT scores and an apparent increase in cultural fragmentation.

We all know that our continuing failure to achieve a high level of national literacy insures a continuing lack of subtlety in the communications that we can transmit widely in speeches, books and newspapers by means of the national language. Even a training manual, for instance, can be much more effective and functional if it can assume a readership that is culturally literate. Moreover, we know that a low standard of literacy debases not only the level of general culture, but also the level of political discussion and of technical and economic effectiveness. The time has come for Americans to be decisive and explicit and specific about the background information that a citizen should know in order to be literate in the 1980s. If we were to act decisively to define cultural literacy, then adult literacy would rise as a matter of course.

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CONDUCTING SUCCESSFUL EUROPEAN STUDY TOURS

A European Study Tour can provide an unparalleled opportunity for learning through real-life experiences. We have conducted five such tours and are convinced that we have positively affected the lives and education of our students with this instructional method. Our three-hour on-campus art history course is designed to incorporate a two-week European art study tour during either the spring break or a summer semester. Besides their normal classroom responsibilities, the students participate in moneymaking projects to partially fund their tour and take on operational duties related to the tour itself, such as: tour coordinator, working directly with the travel agent; baggage comptroller, responsible for all the baggage at the terminals; or projects director, in charge of moneymaking projects. [Only those students who have been actively involved in the moneymaking projects are allowed to participate in the tour.]

General Considerations

1. The course includes both content subject matter as well as travel basics.
    a. Students can enroll for the course with or without the tour included.
    b. Background history, customs, and etiquette in the countries to be visited are presented.
    c. Information about packing, exchanging money, basic hygiene, and group cooperation are other discussion items.
    d. Those participating in the tour are required to write a personal tour reaction paper in addition to the usual class tests and research paper.
2. Two or more courses in other disciplines can be offered in conjunction with one study tour (i.e., literature, drama or history).
    a. Individual instructors can design semester courses which include the study tour.
    b. The classes can meet independently to study course subject matter and jointly to cover special topics like "survival language."
    c. Teachers and students alike benefit from designing interdisciplinary experiences into the tour.
    d. Teachers who are new to foreign travel may want to jointly sponsor a tour with a more "seasoned" traveler/teacher.
3. Options for financing the instructors' tour can be explored.
    a. Institutions may see the tour as a faculty development expenditure.
    b. Travel companies often offer a free or reduced rate to tour sponsors, or divide the cost among the other participants.
    c. Student enrollment fees for the courses might include a "tour fee" to help cover some of the costs.
4. A physical exam should be required of all tour members.
    a. Perhaps the college's health center could provide the exams.
    b. Each participant should be properly immunized.
    c. Teachers should be aware of any tour member's health problems or medications.
    d. Instructors should have the right to refuse anyone deemed a health "risk" from participating.
5. Instructors and students should be aware of college liability, travel insurance, carrier regulations, and passport procedures.
    a. College liability releases, signed by participants, serve to protect the teachers and the college.
    b. The carrier or travel agent can provide reasonable travel insurance.
    c. Passports should be acquired far ahead of the departure date.
6. A Study Tour can be offered every other year.
    a. This affords each student at the college an opportunity to participate at least once.
    b. The tour can be used as a recruitment and retention tool.
    c. Moneymaking projects can be extended for a year or longer if desired.

Moneymaking Possibilities (art orientation)

1. Halloween spook house
2. Student illustrated calendars, Christmas cards, or coloring books
3. Foreign theme dinners
4. Student art auction
5. Private commissions (signs, logos, etc.)
6. Silk screened clothing, posters or cards

Student Skills Enhanced

1. Cooperation with others
2. Money management
3. Advertisement and marketing
4. Time management
5. Public relations
6. Application of learned artistic skills
7. Self confidence
8. Leadership opportunities
9. Awareness of other countries and cultures

Basic "Mechanics" of a Study Tour

1. Work with a reputable travel company and agent.
2. Decide on a maneuverable number of tour members. [We find twenty students and two sponsors ideal.]
3. Consider spring tours. They encounter fewer other tourists in most places.
4. Assign each participant, including the instructors, a number. "Counting off" is a good way to occasionally see that everyone is present.
5. Make one person responsible for all the tickets at airport counters to expedite processing.
6. Purchase all museum or other tickets at the same time to obtain group or student rates.
7. Require participants to carry the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the hotels with them at all times, along with money for public transportation should they get lost.
8. Don't plan too much for a two-week tour. [We find one or two major cities and side trips to be more than enough.]
9. Suggest that tour members travel with older luggage, if possible.
10. Consider marking all the group's luggage in a distinctive way in order to avoid loss.
11. Itineraries should be sent to family or guardians prior to departure, in case of an emergency.
12. Fly out of a major city, if possible, to obtain better rates.
13. Suggest money belts for securing money, passports, etc. [We require them.]
14. Be sure students take appropriate attire for the planned events, as well as walking shoes.
15. Participants should carry nutritional food bars or an equivalent with them each day as schedules and meals are often irregular while traveling.
16. Consider allowing students a "free day" during the tour. [We require each student to inform us of his/her destination and encourage groups of two or three to travel together.]
17. Be *emphatic* about illegal drug usage abroad! Make sure everyone is aware that any possession of drugs can jeopardize the entire group.
18. Don't promise to see any specific sights. Many places are temporarily closed due to restorations, strikes, or holidays. [We say: "Every attempt will be made to see . . . ."]
19. Make regular passport checks to assure the safety of students and instructors.

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TEACHING CRITICAL THINKING AND VALUING AS BASIC SKILLS

Study after study has shown that students at community colleges define themselves as goal-oriented, work-oriented students trying to develop skills which will enable them to succeed in a world dominated by technology. Community colleges have rightly sought to appeal to such students, by emphasizing both technical and scientific training and the preparation in basic skills—such as writing—that are needed as prerequisites for such training. However, I am concerned that many of us in community colleges sometime forget that the teaching of writing involves much more than covering the essentials of grammar and paragraph development.

As a teacher of freshman composition at a community college on the Mexican border, a college whose students are predominantly Hispanic, I have been concerned about the *political* implications of the teaching of writing—especially since, like Carl Rogers, I realize increasingly that I am "only interested in learnings which significantly influence behavior." Paradoxically, however, I have observed that the students in my "Research and Critical Writing" course have consistently failed to reap what I feel are the real benefits of education in general and of writing a research paper in particular: skill in critical thinking—the ability to abstract themselves from a given set of biases in order to analyze and evaluate their environment—and growth in the ability to apply their values in the decision-making process, a growth which may follow from the development of critical thinking skills. My belief that my own methodology was contributing to this failure led me to restructure the course and to emphasize the "basic skills" of critical thinking and valuing.

I began with the assumption that the teaching of writing is a political act. Surely all of us as educators believe that there is some connection between writing and life—but what exactly is that connection? How does the teaching of writing define our assumptions about and our relationships to the human community? How do freshman composition courses—the ones required for most of our students—reflect our involvement (or lack of involvement) in a world of social change?

In "Politics and the English Language," George Orwell insisted that learning to write is inherently political—that there is a direct connection between how we write and how we think, and so ultimately, how we act in the world. Since this essay is so often used in composition courses, we must assume that many teachers of writing agree with that perspective. Surely the authors of most freshman rhetoric texts reveal, implicitly and explicitly, their belief in that connection: discussion of, for example, connotation, euphemism, and argumentation all deal with the ability of language to affect the real world of experience. Apparently, then, many composition instructors are convinced that there is some relationship between being an effective writer and being an effective citizen in a democracy, and with being an effective *humane* being. And surely the key to this relationship between writing and action is our teaching of critical thinking and the ability to apply values to real-world contexts.

But our current teaching of composition all too often contains subtle political messages which belie the supposedly liberating, democratizing quality of literacy. Richard Ohmann, for example, contends that freshman composition courses—far from developing true critical thinking and valuing skills—simply reinforce a chauvinist, exploitative world-view. A popular freshman rhetoric states near the beginning of the book that "To learn to write . . . is to learn to think in a certain way," in a way that will help one "succeed" in a "technological society"—in a way, that is, that does not provoke students to challenge their society, but rather socializes them to conform to it. And this paradox—the assumption that writing should help students develop "critical thinking" skills yet also prepare them for unquestioning acquiescence to the values of "technological society"—is precisely the evil which Ohmann finds in current versions of the freshman English course.

Clearly, then, learning to write is not necessarily liberating; in fact, writing courses all too often form part of an educational system that stifles, that domesticates. Yet the Brazilian-born educator Paulo Freire has shown how the teaching of writing can indeed be liberating. Freire has defined what he calls the "culture of silence" of poor people in the Third World. In response to this passivity, Freire has devoted his professional career to creating a "pedagogy of the oppressed," a methodology of teaching literacy whereby the impoverished masses can be freed from the restricting world-view and learn to "rename" the world—to combine word and action in a literacy which is as much a consciousness-raising as it is a study of grammar.

I believe that many of my students are also victims of this "culture of silence": years of discrimination and poverty have trapped them in the same sense of alienation and powerlessness which afflicts the poor in the Third World. Instead of reinforcing this dangerous passivity, I decided to use Freire's pedagogy to create writing projects that would foster true critical thinking and valuing skills.

I began by selecting Jonathan Kozol's assault on American education—*The Night is Dark and I am Far From Home*—as the practical basis (what Freire calls the "generative theme") for both the course content and the research project. Kozol writes that U.S. public schools act as a system of state indoctrination which conditions students to deny their own consciences. What Kozol proposes instead is "education by dialectic"—supplying students with enough information to challenge the bias of the state, and thus to form their own conclusions about the nature of reality.

This past semester, I began by having the class watch and discuss such films as *Hearts and Minds, Harland County USA*, and *Huelga*! In addition, rather than lecture, I divided the students into nine groups; each was responsible for creating a class presentation based on assigned readings in books I placed on reserve—readings designed to allow the students to challenge the conventional assumptions of their society (as defined by Kozol). These readings included Plato's "Myth of the Cave," *The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism, Cry of the People, Missing*, and essays by Martin Luther King. The resulting group projects were both entertaining and stimulating: one group transformed the classroom into a UN General Assembly meeting, with the students representing the West, the Communist bloc, and the Third World, debating the resolution that no nation has the right to interfere in the affairs of any other; another group took Gulf and Western Corporation to "trial" in the case of the death of a former employee of the corporation in the Dominican Republic; another group dramatized the transcript of the trial of Rosika Schwimmer, an immigrant from Hungary who was denied citizenship because of her pacifism.

Moreover, I asked each group to respond to its particular work not only on the basis of factual questions, but also on the basis of *values*: "Do you think Nyere of Tanzania is right when he says that no one should have a surplus of food until each person has enough to survive? What changes in your own lifestyle would you be willing to make in order to insure that each person has enough?" Such questions forced students to clarify their own values and to test those values by applying them to real-world dilemmas.

But the major project of the semester was, of course, the research paper, and it too served as a logical extension of our exploration of Kozol's thesis that American education is never neutral. Each student selected for a topic some crucial event, person, or theme covered in high school textbooks, and then conducted enough independent research to write a paper in which she evaluated how the public school texts presented her chosen issue. Papers which investigated how American textbooks cover such topics as the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, the Gulf of Tonkin Incident, and the overthrow of Allende in Chile not only forced the students to attempt to determine some "truth" by comparing conflicting versions of the same event; they also, judging by students' remarks to me, generated the "moral dilemma" Lawrence Kohlberg speaks of—the cognitive conflict out of which moral growth may arise.

Surely, then, the abilities to think critically and to clarify and to apply values are important and necessary parts of learning to write, and are just as much "basic skills" for our students as learning how to run a computer or how to solve an algebra problem—or how to punctuate a sentence. In terms of my own experiment, I cannot quantitatively measure the growth of these abilities. But for evidence that it does occur, I can turn to the comments of my students, for whom the experience of the course has been more than an academic exercise, more than writing another research paper. In the words of one: "The class made me a better writer. More importantly, it made me a better person."

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THE WORD PROCESSOR AND ENGLISH COMPOSITION

English instructors, at least those of my acquaintance, have shown little inclination to leap upon the latest high tech bandwagon. But now high tech is playing our song. Word processors are well established in their reputation for greatly easing the mechanical aspects of writing and editing. In addition, they are widely used in business and also available as peripheral features of personal computers. As a result, a large portion of our students now have access to them, and many are expected to master their use on the job. The time has come for composition instructors to overcome their typical aversion to all things technical and to adapt their teaching methods to the obvious advantages of composing on a word processor.

Such was the argument from Clark County Community College's Dean of Educational Services and the Communication and Fine Arts Division Director when they persuaded me to accept a small grant to learn to use Digital Corporation's DECmate and to incorporate its use into the teaching of English composition. Ten DECmate II's had been donated to Clark County Community College by a local newspaper, *The Review Journal*. I spent the entire summer of 1983 learning to type on the DECmate (it took that long because at the outset I couldn't type at all), and then the next four semesters experimenting with methods of persuading my students to type and edit their compositions on DECmate II's.

A primary concern was academic integrity. Neither I nor the administration wanted to change the course description of my English 101 sections, making them some kind of combination typing/composition classes or in any other way deviant. That meant that course objectives had to remain essentially the same and that no major changes could be made to course requirements.

Another problem was Clark County Community College's open admissions policy. Even though my DECmate sections were tagged in the schedule, I anticipated students registering who, for various reasons, might not be able to master the word processor. Would they fail the course or earn a lower grade as a result? Since the course description was not different from that of any other English 101, by all principles of legality and justice they could not be penalized for not learning the DECmate. How then would they be motivated to do all the writing required for English 101 and also learn to type on the DECmate?

English 101—DECmate Style

The first semester (Fall 1983) that I taught one DECmate section of English 101 was not particularly successful. The DECmate lab was not set up until the third or fourth week into the semester. Also, I did not schedule much class time in the lab. I allowed just one period for students to look at the overview software, which gave them a vague idea of DECmate's capabilities but little specific instruction. After that I counted on them to learn the system on their own. Few of them did so, even though instructional software and manuals were available for that purpose.

I decided that for following semesters every possible technique to increase student motivation had to be employed. I was partially assisted by the budget office, which tacked a lab fee on to the DECmate English 101 sections. That, of course, helped restrict enrollment to students motivated enough to pay an extra $20.00. However, more encouragement was needed. First, I asked the printing office to design certificates of achievement that read "[Student name] has mastered the elementary editing features of DECmate II." I displayed an example on the first day of class and expounded at length on how impressive such a certificate would look to a potential employer. To this I added a graphic description of my own limited abilities to master anything technical. Then I showed them the course syllabus, which I had typed on the DECmate.

All of this was quite effective for a starter, but I needed more. Initial training, I concluded, was crucial, so I scheduled more time in the first three weeks of class in the DECmate lab. Dividing my class in half (class size on any given day averages about 20 after early drops), I left half in the classroom watching a tape/slide presentation on the paragraph and took the other half to the lab to view the DECmate instructional software. We have ten terminals, so this generally worked out to one student per terminal, with occasional sharing. Each student spent two class periods in the lab, which was sufficient for most to complete the programmed instructional course. I stressed the need for further practice and the probable necessity of reviewing the material on the student's own time. I also pointed out the DECmate manuals, available in the lab with step-by-step written instructions for all phases of operation. In addition, the students were provided with a hand-out with start-up instructions and a list of basic procedures.

These practices assured that most students, at the end of the first three weeks of class, could generate something in writing from the DECmate. They had also, incidentally, reviewed the basics of paragraph writing. Having purchased their personal diskettes from the bookstore, they were at last ready for a written assignment—a long delay, to be sure, but one I considered worthwhile. They were assigned a paragraph and given a week to turn out a printed copy. Most students submitted typed paragraphs. I lavishly praised their technical skills while critiquing their writing with usual rigor. Thereafter, I conducted class in the traditional manner, though after the second or third writing assignment, I clipped achievement certificates to all DECmate-produced papers.

As I stated at the start, I could not change basic objectives or course requirements to accommodate the DECmate component. However, I felt that certain modifications were justified. For example, editing is an intrinsic part of writing, and DECmate's foremost advantage is that it eases the editing process. Therefore, I required all papers to be rewritten and edited. Ten percent of the course grade was earned through paper editing (and quizzes). I decided not to make that percentage any larger because I wanted students to put their best efforts into writing an excellent paper the first time around. Editing after grading all too often consists of correcting errors the instructor has marked, without much thought to serious revision. The DECmate, I'm sorry to report, has not eliminated this problem, though I'm trying to change the way I grade by making the kinds of comments that will lead to revision, not just the correction of mechanical errors.

In addition to the grade for editing, I included a requirement that all papers be typed; but again, due to the Clark County Community College's open admission policy and the original English 101 course description, I could not hold to this requirement absolutely. I explained this to my students up-front—stressing, of course, the obvious advantages to typing their papers on the DECmate, including the ease of editing graded papers.

The DECmate Lab

I have not as yet said much about the set-up of the DECmate lab. I would like to outline what I consider a workable arrangement. All labs have to be supervised by monitors, and any word processing lab is no exception. The DECmates are remarkably durable, but abuse is always possible. Most of all, a monitor well acquainted with DECmate is needed to assist students having difficulties. This person should understand, though, that the students are training themselves; they should not be hovered over or given instructions verbally when such information is available in the lab manuals. The monitor should invervene only when the problem appears beyond the student's ability to solve it. Such supervision can most effectively take place if the DECmates are housed separately, rather than as part of a larger entity such as a micro-processing or typing lab. I also recommend that DECmate lab monitors be hired and supervised by the same administrative entity that houses the English program. English faculty should be closely involved in training and supervision.

In Summary

Not only is the DECmate/English 101 marriage at Clark County Community College still intact after two years, but offspring are on the way. In March, 1985, I trained eight adjunct English faculty in my combination techniques. Four of them have agreed to teach English 101 sections with the DECmate component for Fall 1985.

Word processors do not automatically turn poor or mediocre students into articulate writers. But, from a purely mechanical standpoint, they certainly make the writing process easier. They don't teach a student to compose any better, but they eliminate the frustration of recopying. Composition teachers today are at fault if they do not actively encourage students to utilize the most effective techniques of getting words on paper, thereby freeing them to concentrate on their real chores: discovering what they want to say and the best way to say it.

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor
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HOW TO ENCOURAGE DESPAIRING STUDENTS AND PREVENT THEM FROM DISAPPEARING

Often students drop classes unnecessarily. They don't know that, though, and quit working when they could have succeeded. They sometimes drop despite their instructors' efforts to encourage them to keep working and stay in class. Often, instructors just don't know what to say to motivate these students and watch helplessly as they struggle, flounder, drift into despair and give up. However, the principles of expectancy value theory may be useful in talking effectively with discouraged students.

Expectancy Value Theory

The basic premise of the expectancy value theory is: The more confidence one has that an action will produce a desired result, the more likely one is to complete the action.

Notice the links in the chain:

1. People expect that their *actions* will produce *results.*
2. They expect that the *results* will produce *rewards.*
3. They expect that the *rewards* will be *valuable.*

Expectancy value theory directly implies that college students will stay in a course and work hard when they believe that staying and working hard will produce rewards that they value. As long as they have positive expectations, they will persist despite all the common troubles students have—working with difficult material, making low grades, and having personal problems. If, however, they become convinced that their work is going to produce nothing rewarding and valuable to them, they will quit. Note that the key to student persistence is not what really will happen in the future but what students *expect will happen.*

How to Use Expectancy Value Theory

Expect that Work Leads to Results—Many students truly believe that they are too dumb to succeed, and their first attempts to study often convince them further. If the work is difficult, if there's a lot of it, if time is short, and if learning comes slowly, then students often conclude they can't learn at all. Conversely, sometimes the best students set very high standards for themselves, then conclude they cannot get the grade, and become discouraged.

Sometimes an instructor merely needs to point out that more time on task will improve performance—and demonstrating same will give the student incentive to continue. For example, many students taking College Algebra and Calculus need to put in 15 hours or more of study a week; many underestimate "learning time." As well, they often will learn things one day, forget them the next day, and need to review. They should be told that this cycle is quite normal and that they must devote more time to reviewing previously learned material. An instructor needs to say, "I know it's difficult, it could take x-amount of time, but I believe you can succeed if you take my suggestion."

Students often use ineffective study techniques; assuming that this is likely, instructors should describe techniques that work. For example, in our Anatomy and Physiology course (taken by students in such programs as Dental Hygiene, Nursing, and Respiratory Therapy) both conceptual understanding and an extraordinary amount of memorization are required. Many students accustomed to making A's and B's in courses with a lighter memory load continue to study anatomy and physiology the same way. They read, they underline, and they reread. They often cram the material into long study periods. The consequences of their study methods are short memories and confusion of the new terms. Then, they despair over the results of their exams. An instructor can demonstrate the use of effective memory techniques—e.g., using the keyword method of memorizing; distributing study sessions over many shorter sessions; studying a few concepts at a time; building larger sets gradually; and testing themselves frequently. It is encouraging to hear about methods that promise to produce good results.

Beware of the Trap—Sometimes, however, instructors look at their students in trouble and get too easily convinced that these students are going to fail. The discouraged students discourage their instructors.

The key to encouraging them is to determine whether in fact they can succeed given their level of preparation and the time remaining in the course. If you conclude they can succeed, then vividly recall those who have made it in the past, look these present students in the eye, and tell them soberly and confidently that they can make it. When you know yourself that it's true, you can often help students believe it.

Expect that Results Produce Rewards—Another serious problem is students believing that they can learn the material but that they won't be rewarded with things of value to them. This problem relates to the second principle of expectancy value theory.

Good grades are very important rewards to most students. If they believe their instructor won't reward honest accomplishment with good grades, they are likely to quit trying. Often they believe that the tests are unfair and that the teacher's grading standards are too severe. Some instructors in our Nursing Department conduct an item analysis on each test, identifying poor test items and eliminating them from the grading. They share what they are doing with their students, and students are encouraged that the testing/grading system is fair.

Students want their work and the course content to have some value after the course is over. Far too often, instructors just teach the subject and don't relate it to financial, social, intellectual, personal, altruistic, legal, and other situations outside the classroom. Students are encouraged to hear: "At this point in time, this bit of information will allow you to . . . ."

Share knowledge and skills to come later in the course. Expectancy value theory holds that people are future-oriented. It is important that students expect the coming weeks to contain interesting, valuable material. You can do this by giving "previews of coming attractions," describing forthcoming topics in an interesting way, writing your syllabus of assignments so that the wording promises rewarding information. When certain material seems both dull and useless in itself, acknowledge its dullness and the amount of time and effort it will take to learn it. Then explain *why* it is important to spend that time and effort.

Expect that the Rewards are Valuable—Finally, it's not called expectancy value theory for nothing. Until now I've been assuming that people value all the rewards they get from learning. But they don't always. When people value something, they consider it important, attractive, significant, and desirable. When people don't value something, they think it is trivial, unrelated to their deeper desires, and generally unimportant.

Have students identify the rewards they will value in the future; then have them identify the knowledge that will produce these rewards—both serious and fun. As well, connect the course material to your own values. Too often, we instructors look out at a sea of bored faces and teach the same material year after year. We gradually become convinced that the material is not valuable or interesting, and our belief shows in our tone of voice and body language.

Encourage Students Before It's Too Late—Teachers should employ preventive medicine. Boosting students' beliefs that hard work leads to academic success and helps them attain the things they value does pay off. Don't wait until students are in academic trouble to provide that boost!

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ACADEMIC ADVISING: THE WINNING SYSTEM

During the fall of 1983, Eastern Wyoming College's administrators became concerned with the previous years' attrition of full-time students. Nationally, community colleges had an attrition rate of about 52 percent, and EWC's attrition rate was 54 percent. The administrators decided that it was just as important to keep our students in school as it was to recruit them. The Director of Admissions and the other administrators believed that academic advising would help decrease attrition and increase overall enrollment. The Director of Admissions became the Coordinator of Academic Advising, and he was given full administrative support. It was decided that EWC would implement a three-year plan.

Academic Advisor Selection

In the spring of 1983, the Coordinator of Academic Advising selected five faculty members from various disciplines to attend an A.C.T. Conference on academic advising. The faculty members were chosen because they were dedicated to education and to Eastern Wyoming College and because they were willing to take time to help students be more successful at EWC. This cadre of advisors became the Academic Advising Committee.

Following the A.C.T. Conference, the Academic Advising Committee conducted a workshop for all faculty and professional staff. Topics covered were: skills of academic advising, motivating students to take responsibility, how to work with exploratory/undecided students and academically underprepared students.

Five more faculty members volunteered to join the Academic Advising Committee. These ten members agreed to be academic advising specialists who work with students, regardless of their background or major. The academic advising specialists have become the elite of our campus advisors.

Academic Advising Delivery System

Advisee Assignments—During the month of August, the Coordinator studies each new student's application and previous educational background. An Early Alert System (E.A.S.) is used at Eastern to identify potential drop-outs. Each student identified is assigned to an advising specialist. The E.A.S. criteria may be any combination of the following: undecided/undeclared major; general studies major; below 15 composite A.C.T. score; below 2.50 GPA; being in the lower one-third class rank; having a G.E.D.; a late applicant; and other special criteria such as health, age, and personal background. Students showing little concern for their academic progress are also red-flagged and given an academic advising specialist who has set aside time to work with these students on college survival skills—e.g., problem solving and goal setting. An E.A.S. student is given a stronger possibility for success because an advisor is there to help and to care. No advisor is given more than twenty-four advisees, so the advisor has time to take a personal interest in each one of his or her advisees.

New Student Orientation—New Student Orientation occurs during the first two days of the school year. The ten advising specialists are orientation leaders. A student attends small group sessions with an orientation leader and fifteen to twenty other students. In these sessions the student begins learning and developing college survival skills. Each orientation leader helps his or her group explore interpersonal skills, survival skills, time management; use the student handbook and the college catalog; schedule classes; and register. A student develops a sense of belonging through the interaction that takes place in the sessions. The orientation leaders and the students go beyond information sharing; the caring atmosphere fosters friendships and strong future contacts for the student.

Eastern uses the A.C.T. ASSET program, giving the English and math placement tests during the small group sessions while the students are in a somewhat familiar environment. We have found that correct placement builds a stronger advising system, and it usually helps the students achieve success in their classes.

Finally, orientation ends with a faculty vs. student softball game and an all-school, family-style picnic. This strengthens the friendships made during orientation. It also shows new students that the faculty and staff at EWC are "real people" who care about students.

Advising Materials—Each academic advisor is provided an advising handbook, advisees' academic records, an EWC catalog, a course transfer guide, other college catalogs, and a list of referral agencies.

Advisor Alert System—The Advisor Alert is a tool used by the faculty throughout the school year. It is a form that includes the name of the student, the course, and the summary of concern when a student begins to falter in a course. The instructor submits the completed form to the Academic Advising Office, that in turn forwards it to the appropriate advisor. It should be noted that this process can occur at different times during the semester; but Advisor Alerts are always filled out a few weeks after school begins, helping to short-circuit problems long before mid-term when corrective action can still be taken. The advisors follow with direct intervention—making phone calls, writing letters, and generally "tracking students down." Advisors try to identify a student's problems in a particular class, discuss various alternatives with the student, and decide upon a course of action. The entire process demonstrates to students that someone really cares, helps them make good decisions and learn to accept responsibility.

Evaluation—At the end of each semester, all advisors are evaluated in two, and sometimes three, areas: student evaluations; attrition by advisor; and, sometimes, attrition by program. Previously, we used an in-house student perception inventory with a numerical scale for student evaluations. This year, we will use the A.C.T. Survey of Academic Advising. [An interesting sidelight: Since we began using academic advising specialists, ratings have been consistently higher than in previous evaluations.]

Other Aspects—Advisors and advisees have frequent contact during the academic year. Scheduled meetings at school are common, but an advisor and advisee often establish special bonds of friendship in other ways. Some of our advisors report helping a student through the death of a family member, bailing a student out of jail, having tailgate parties at rodeos, going to birthday parties, and taking phone calls at home for anything and everything. Many of our advisors are just people caring about people. These types of personal involvement and commitment are what make academic advising "click" at EWC.

The Results

The goal has been to decrease the attrition rate and to increase overall enrollment. From a high of 54%, Eastern Wyoming College's attrition rate has steadily declined: 47%, to 44%, to 38%, to 34.5%, and presently to 31.9%. Also, the fall of 1985 saw the highest enrollment ever of returning sophomores. We, of course, feel that academic advising is working.

The Future

The Academic Advising Committee has developed a compensation plan that will be implemented in the spring semester of 1986. All faculty members who are advising outside of their disciplines, and the faculty members who are working with non-routine advisees (such as undecided or general studies majors), will be compensated for their advising efforts.

The compensation plan follows:

Number of Advisees	*C.R.U.	Value
17-24	1	$750.00
9-16	2/3	$500.00
1-8	1/3	$250.00

*Classroom Unit is the equivalent of a three-hour teaching load. Advisors will be compensated either by reducing their teaching load or by giving them additional pay, as circumstances determine.

Conclusion

Eastern Wyoming College has found a way to monitor a student's academic progress and to intervene at the appropriate times to keep that student in school: the Academic Advising System. An additional benefit is the social maturity our students gain through interaction with caring, empathetic advisors. Because our faculty members believe in the high priority of academic advising, EWC is a productive place for students to learn.

The academic advising specialists have exemplified this spirit by volunteering to accept the extra duties of advising E.A.S. students. At this point, other faculty members are asking to become a part of the team of specialists. Hopefully, the entire Eastern Wyoming College faculty will become academic advising specialists.

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"PRACTICAL THEORY" TEACHING AND GRADING METHODS IN BUSINESS LAW CLASSES

A dozen years ago when I accepted a field position with Commerce Clearing House, I was issued an employee manual that used the entire opening page to display these few words, "We pay for results, not effort." No other words, before or since, have captured the basic differences between academia and the private sector for me. In many ways those words changed my outlook, attitude, and performance on that and subsequent jobs. I was challenged to bring more of my perception of those differences into my teaching. I describe my approach with a stereotypical statement: four-year colleges teach theory; vocational/technical schools teach practical skills; and since two-year colleges serve both transfer and technical students, we should teach the most "practical theory" possible.

Psychologists refer to the problem of inert knowledge when describing the memorization of large units of information that students later are unable to apply in practical settings. David Perkins of Harvard says, "The remedy for inert knowledge is to teach knowledge in the context of active problem-solving, where the knowledge is put into use as it is being acquired." Morano found: "In management courses (such as marketing, law, and economics), teachers can enhance their effectiveness by using case studies, class discussion, role playing, and films."

I have attempted to combine my perception of the world of work, psychological learning principles, and effective methods in my teaching. A typical business law class for me opens with a fictitious scenario involving my students playing the role of local business managers/owners in the middle of a contract, bailment, or agency dilemma. The class then discusses the problem and makes recommendations for action. I conclude by discussing assigned cases as a method of reinforcing the principles involved.

As a continuation of this teaching style, I developed dollar grading as a means of communicating more than points on a test: an expectation for results and a payoff for ability and/or hard work. Specifically, my straight point method uses dollar amounts as the basis for grade decisions. I give four tests during the term, each worth $40. The comprehensive final exam is worth $100. In addition, each student completes assigned legal research and participates in class activities for another $40. My tests consist of multiple choice questions and are scored by a scanner. I count each question as one dollar. If a student, for example, gets 33 of 40 answers correct on a test, then the scanner marks the incorrect answers and prints the number 33 on the answer sheet. I then add a dollar sign ($) to the number of correct answers (33) and record that number in my grade book. I tell the students, on a written syllabus passed out during the first class meeting, that they need $270 to earn an A (90%), $240 to earn a B (80%), $210 to earn a C, and $180 for a D. I also provide students an opportunity to work overtime (earn extra dollars) by presenting an oral book review in my office. Thus, students may earn as much as $15 extra for a good book review. On the other hand, I dock their pay $15 for each class absence beginning with the fourth cut.

This system has been successful in communicating grades and attitudes to my students. To my surprise, a side effect has been that students do not plead for more points. While a student might ask a professor to "give me four more points," no student has yet asked me for four dollars more as a gift.

Conclusions

The dollar grading system is a simple addition to the straight points method of grading. It integrates more reality into business law classes and has worked well in my effort to provide a more meaningful classroom environment for my students.

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A COMPETITION FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

A new community college had just been built in a rural community. Twenty-eight four-year colleges and universities were within a 50-mile radius of this community college. An older, established community college was within a 20-minute drive for the majority of the population. A new city was being built around the new college but would take many years to complete. The current high school students did not seem to be interested in the new school. The families in the county had a yearly income which was ranked ninth or tenth in the nation. And there was a rumor going around that the new college (an open-door institution) would accept anyone and was just a continuation of high school. We had a problem!

The solution to the problem took many years and consisted of many different strategies. One strategy was to start a competition for the advanced high school students. We realized that these students would likely never attend the college; but by holding the competition at the college, we would introduce them to our facilities, our instructors and our courses. Some might even take courses at the college while still in high school and then transfer the credits elsewhere later on.

There was a modest beginning to the competition, which took place in May just prior to graduation. While it had its problems, it was an obvious success: the high schools were looking forward to the next year's competition, and we experienced a growth (well above the college average) in our particular courses. (Of course, we must admit that some other variables were being introduced during that time.)

Then, the high schools asked that we hold one competition each semester, rather than only one a year. The result was two competitions each year—then four, then six, and then eight (there are eight high schools in the county, and competitions are now held at each).

Writing good questions for individuals, teams and even relays quickly became very time consuming for the two full-time faculty at the college, so the high school teachers became participants and submitted questions and ideas before the start of the academic year. The County Board of Education paid each team sponsor to write questions and to coach the team once a week after school. The college prepared the competition, administered the event and handled publicity. The high schools made arrangements for the facilities, refreshments and awards.

Creating good and unique competitions became harder for both the high school teachers and the college faculty involved, so a service—with sources across the county—was engaged. This service submitted questions and ideas at the requested level of difficulty. The high school and college actually made up the competition, and the college administered it. (Now the high schools have an overall administrator, and one assigned duty is the coordination of all phases of the competition.)

Presently, the high schools recommend that many of their students complete the first two years of their "college" program in our community college. We still don't attract the top students, but our courses continually grow. We attribute much of the success to this competition!

Finally, I should tell you that this is a mathematics competition. If you had begun with that knowledge, you likely would not have read this far. Given the anxiety that math usually creates, one might seriously question using it to get students interested in your college. But in the final analysis, the math competition has done exactly what we hoped it would do. It has created great enthusiasm: most teams wear matching t-shirts, and some have even written and performed their own cheers. Students and parents now know that the math program at Howard Community College is a good one: we have doubled our full-time faculty in mathematics and look to further increases in the near future. There is another positive off-shoot of this competition: top students in math are challenged to work hard as members of an academic team throughout their four-year high school career.

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THE SUCCESS CONNECTION: EXAMINING THE FRUITS OF EXCELLENCE

In 1985 we conducted two studies of teaching excellence in American schools and community colleges. The first study is reported in the recently published *Profiling Excellence in America's Schools*, available from the American Association of School Administrators, 1801 N. Moore Street, Arlington, Virginia 22209-9988. The second report, *Access and Excellence: The Open Door Challenge*, will be published by the Community College Press, a Division of AACJC, in September 1986.

In this abstract we summarize the findings from our study of reforms and outcomes at Miami-Dade Community College, the institution nominated by our panel of nationally-recognized experts as the community college with the best reputation for excellence in teaching. As a result of our intensive case study at Miami-Dade, we identified several basic reforms—all directed at the improvement of student success. Our discussion here will focus on those reforms most directly related to improved student persistence and achievement.

Results of the Reform at Miami-Dade Community College

Placement Testing—As part of the reform system, Miami-Dade reinstated placement testing. The Comparative Guidance and Placement (CGP) test in reading, writing, and computation is used to place students. Using the CGP, students who are in college for the first time, students having earned 15 college credits or more, and students wishing to enroll in any math or English course are required to be tested. If the CGP results indicate that students are deficient in any of the basic skills areas, they are required to take developmental courses and are restricted in other coursework and course load.

Statistics documented that as a result of entry assessment and mandatory placement, retention declined in the first year (50% to 45%), but increased in the following year (50% to 52%). Black students showed an increase in retention rates (32% to 48%), but black students entering in 1979 showed a 25 percent increase in the three-year graduation rate over those entering in 1976 (when the system was not in effect). The enrollment level stayed flat during the implementation of the entry assessment and mandatory placement system. Statistics compiled for developmental students who had been in the system at Miami-Dade for three years revealed that for students tested who needed one developmental course, 51% were still in the system or had graduated. Of students tested who needed two developmental courses, 52% were still in the system or had graduated; and for students tested who needed three developmental courses, 47% were still in the system or had graduated. These statistics also revealed that if a student takes developmental courses when they are recommended, his/her chances of graduating are nine times better than if he/she chooses to decline them.

Standards of Academic Progress—The Standards of Academic Progress (SOAP) is a system whereby student performance is monitored and credit load is controlled beginning once a student has completed seven credits. This system incorporates three levels of feedback, including warning, probation, and suspension for those students who have a low grade point average or excessive withdrawals from classes. Thirteen thousand students have been suspended from Miami-Dade in the past five years under the provisions of the Standards of Academic Progress. Miami-Dade views these suspensions as evidence of their decision to convey the message to non-achieving students that there is no longer any help that the college can provide for them and that every effort has been extended to help them achieve success. It is interesting to note, however, that many of the suspended students eventually return to the college; and when they do, their performance is generally much improved.

A study conducted on the SOAP revealed that this system was clearly related to improved student academic performance. The suspension rate has declined each term for the last four terms, and studies conducted on the pool of students eligible for suspension reveal that this decline is the result of improved performance on the part of students, rather than to increasing numbers of students leaving Miami-Dade. The study also revealed that the load restrictions and other supportive SOAP measures are producing the intended outcomes of increased student performance, persistence and success.

Student Information Systems—Through the use of the Academic Alert System, all students receive individualized information concerning their current academic progress when they have been in attendance approximately six weeks into each term. In a survey conducted on the use of the Academic Alert System, 93% of the students at Miami-Dade indicated that they appreciated receiving the personalized information when it was still possible to implement a plan for corrective action, and faculty expressed satisfaction with the results, as well.

The Advisement and Graduation Information System (AGIS) keeps students informed of the progress they are making towards completing the requirements of a specific program of study, performs checks for those graduating by pinpointing completed courses and currently enrolled courses, and recommends courses which are required for an unencumbered transfer to an upper-division university.

Intervention—A study of Miami-Dade's intervention system revealed that early assistance and more direction for those experiencing difficulty help students to improve performance. Statistics from the study revealed that when 4,171 students were alerted through the use of the Academic Alert System, 82% were able to avoid being placed on academic warning at the end of the school term. A study at Miami-Dade's South Campus revealed that of 624 students who were experiencing academic difficulty, those that did seek assistance—in the form of a course which dealt with study skills, time management and personal goals—showed a dramatic increase in performance. The grade point average of these students increased by .88 (on a 4.0 scale). Subsequently, those students who did not take advantage of additional assistance services experienced a decline in their grade point average of .44. This study also revealed that the students who did seek additional assistance had an increase of 74 percent in successful course-completion rate, while those students who did not seek additional assistance experienced a decline.

A study over a period of three years indicated that the percentage of students performing satisfactorily in all courses at midterm has increased from 45 to 52 percent. In a comparison of two groups of students at Miami-Dade, 86 percent of the students who were alerted to improve their performance at the middle of the term met the required academic standards at the end of the term, in contrast to only 76 percent of those students who were not provided with any information. Statistics from the study also revealed a strong positive correlation between attendance and academic performance. The faculty now maintain attendance records for all classes, and attendance is one of the items reported on the Academic Alert System.

The College Level Academic Skills Test—The College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) was first given in Florida in the fall of 1982. This test was a condition for proceeding to the junior year in state universities. The results of the June 1983 administration of the CLAST show that Miami-Dade Community College Associate Degree graduates post high scores in computation as compared to other colleges and universities. The Miami-Dade Associate in Arts graduates had a mean score in computation that was higher than 25 of the other 27 community colleges, and six of the nine universities. These results were particularly impressive in view of the fact that approximately 50 percent of the entering students at Miami-Dade test as deficient in mathematics in the college placement test.

Conclusion

Our study of Miami-Dade Community College documents well what colleges can do to be more successful with today's diverse student populations. These students can succeed if the community college builds, and enforces, responsible policies and procedures to keep students from making other irresponsible decisions in their lives. Miami-Dade is a model of open-access with solid evidence of quality in teaching.

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IMPROVING LEARNING IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

I don't know what the world will look like in 15 years. No one does. Perhaps the one thing that we can predict with some certainty is that the world will continue to change and that education is the best way we know of to prepare people to change.

The abilities that have become valuable in our kind of world are the skills of synthesis and application. The demand for these higher levels of cognitive development has an analogy in today's perception of physical fitness as a developmental process: when machinery replaced muscles on the job, people moved to a higher level of physical development; perhaps the age of the computer will have a similar impact on cognitive development. Instead of performing the low level cognitive skills of memory and recall, which are handled better by a computer today, human beings are now free to concentrate on higher level development—analysis, synthesis, and the ability to use knowledge.

Following this line of reasoning, I asked myself how educators might go about developing a program of "learning fitness" comparable to the physical fitness movement that has so captured public fancy. Let me give some examples of how the concepts behind physical fitness apply equally well to learning fitness.

1. The dissemination of research on physical fitness has been helpful, and the general public proved fairly easy to reach and to teach. Smoking has declined, jogging has increased, knowledge about the cardiovascular system has spread, and many people know the difference between exercising to develop muscle strength and exercising to develop heart and lung capacity. If learning fitness came to be perceived as important as physical fitness, would not people be eager for more knowledge about how to attain it?
2. Fitness is developmental. It is clearly understood that no one can *give* people physical fitness—not Nautilus, not Adidas, not Jane Fonda, and not the national and local park and recreation system. Experts can diagnose, prescribe, and offer feedback, but in the final analysis, both physical fitness and learning fitness are qualities that people must attain for themselves. The best we can do is provide the environment, the equipment, and the support system to enable people to develop themselves.
3. We cannot modify the rules of physical fitness to take account of the life circumstances of the aspirant. We can't, for example, suggest that adults invest *less time* in the process because they have job and family responsibilities—although we can certainly make jogging tracks available, put exercise rooms and swimming pools in hotels, make the hours of Nautilus consistent with adult schedules, and deliver inspiration and information.
4. We can't make everyone equal in physical fitness. Everyone can improve, and everyone can do something—even if from a wheelchair or in homes for the elderly. But the challenge must be consistent with the ability and condition of the learner. Today's concept of physical fitness is basically non-competitive. Sure, there are a few super stars who win the Boston Marathon, but for most people the companionship of running together and the feeling that they are doing something good for themselves is enough.
5. Fitness must have some payoff; it has to work. People need the reinforcing feedback of feeling better, looking better, and in general taking pride in their accomplishment. One of the interesting things about physical fitness is that people are willing to wait for long-term results. Joggers do have to see improvement, but it does not need to be today or tomorrow. Indeed, the current advice seems to be that intermittent exercise is better than constant pushing and that muscles need time to recover and time to grow and develop.
6. Fitness is never finished. We cannot participate in a rigorous well-balanced program as young people and hope to remain fit for the rest of our lives. We will all slip out of shape from time to time, but we should learn early in life what being in shape feels like and we should know how to get in shape.

7. Fitness is for amateurs. There is no mystique about it, and experts do not intimidate. Although body builders and marathon athletes may know everything there is to know and do everything there is to do in developing their own expertise, they do not deter the rest of us from knowing what works for us.
8. Fitness does not require large expenditures of money. Wearing the right shoes will surely help, but stylish jogging outfits and fancy equipment are incidental, and lack of funds is rarely heard as an excuse for doing nothing.
9. Fitness is active. No one ever became fit by watching someone else or listening to descriptions of fitness. People who are models of fitness can inspire; experts can demonstrate exercises and skills; and reading assignments can inform and develop appreciations; but in the final analysis, the only way to develop fitness is to engage actively in the activities that are known or thought to lead to that goal.

If the goal of a good college is to prepare students for a lifetime of *active learning*, what do we know from research and experience about the processes of teaching and learning and how to improve them?

One of the better applications of research knowledge on teaching and learning in higher education is found in the recent NIE Report on educational reform entitled, *Involvement in Learning* (Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education, 1984). The committee of educational researchers conclude that "The quality of undergraduate education could be significantly improved if American colleges and universities would apply existing knowledge about three critical conditions of excellence—(1) student involvement, (2) high expectations, and (3) assessment and feedback" (p. 17).

They define student involvement as the amount of "time, energy and effort students devote to the learning process" (p. 17). It doesn't take research to convince any teacher that involvement in learning is critical; our own learning experiences and those of our students offer ample testimony. But the two fundamental principles derived from research by the authors of the NIE Report bear highlighting:

1. The amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program, and
2. The effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to the capacity of the policy or practice to improve student involvement in learning (p. 19).

Sandy Astin, in *Achieving Educational Excellence*, contends that students who are involved in almost anything on the campus are more likely to learn and less likely to drop out than students who remain on the periphery. This positive effect occurs in all types of institutions and among all types of students. Holding a part-time job, participating in athletics, student government, honors programs and almost anything else that brings the student into closer contact with faculty and fellow students seems to result in a closer identification with the college with the attendant positive effects on student retention.

Because residential living and student activities are not significant aspects of the community college environment, the burden of involving students falls heavily on classroom teachers. But the typical college classroom doesn't demand much involvement on the part of students. Therefore, the task for teachers is to encourage students to put forth the exertion that is required for learning.

Research suggests that community college teachers strive for student involvement in the classroom, are significantly concerned about individual differences, are student-oriented, and conscientiously provide feedback on student performance. And while they seem to fall short in holding high expectations for their students, there is now a growing movement among community colleges to raise expectations and to demand performance.

I salute you—community college teachers and administrators concerned about teaching—as the frontline for teaching excellence.

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"INTERACTIVE ERRANDS": TOOLS TO ENHANCE THE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE OF ESL STUDENTS

Rationale

We all understand that people who leave their native countries have difficulty adjusting to the language and customs of a new land and are likely to have a hard time locating and using community resources. The inconvenience and frustration these people experience can be prolonged and debilitating, depending upon how well individuals and systems within the host country respond to their needs. Educational institutions such as community colleges bear a unique responsibility for assisting with the adjustment processes of these newcomers.

The time students spend with instructors in a community college classroom, however, is clearly insufficient for them to develop complete "communicative competence." Such communicative competence, including the ability to exchange meaningful cognitive and affective information in a full range of circumstances, can only be acquired via natural, genuine personal contacts. The out-of-class world is a rich but usually under-exploited resource for the acquisition of this competence.

Procedures

Several out-of-class assignments at Austin Community College are employed specifically to enhance communicative competence among ESL (English as a second language) students. Because they require the initiation of contact with outsiders, these assignments are called interactive errands.

Students are sent into the surrounding community on interactive errands to build up linguistic, sociolinguistic, and informational capabilities which can ease their adaptation to life in the United States. Among potential interactive errands are "idiom searches," "human bingo," site visits, and team "quests." Idiom searches are activities in which students take a list of English expressions and get two or three native speakers to explain those expressions and give examples to contextualize their meanings. Site visits and team quests, instead of sending students by themselves, dispatch them in groups to gather facts about historical locations and community organizations.

Human bingo is frequently used at professional education conferences as a "mixer" to get people to meet and learn a few facts about each other. It requires participants to get the signatures of several individuals who fit a number of descriptions revolving around a common topic. The task is considered complete when participants have gathered enough signatures to fill up a row or column on their bingo cards.

Ideally, interactive errands are introduced, conducted, and evaluated in a purposive fashion. At Austin Community College, a three-part process is followed to capitalize upon the advantages of the method.

In-class orientation

An in-class orientation process precedes each interactive errand to equip students with the necessary confidence and competence. Generally, the ingredients in such an orientation are vocabulary, question-asking etiquette and terminology, grammar, cultural features related to the topic of the errand, and an opportunity to practice asking and answering questions with each other.

For a "human bingo" sheet dealing with the topic of food, for example, the instructor might lead students through the following sequence of activities before sending them to collect signatures:

1. Exploring the meanings of "outdoor grill," "food processor," "chili dog," and other unfamiliar terms appearing in the sixteen cells of the signature card.
2. Explaining the advisability and mechanics of setting the stage before posing questions to strangers or casual acquaintances. (It's probably not a good idea to accost a stranger with, "Hi. My name's Abdullah. Have you ever used a doggie bag?")

3. Reviewing English question forms which students will need to employ in their conversations with outsiders; e.g., "You wash dishes every day" turns into "Do you wash dishes every day?"--but "You have made apple pie" does *not* yield "Do you have made apple pie?"
4. Discussing why Americans might or might not bake bread as much today as they did forty or fifty years ago; what kind of person might be most likely to use a food processor, eat at salad bars, or participate in activities against world hunger; to what degree fast food chains selling ice cream may have become common in large American cities; etc.
5. Having the class split into pairs or two large groups to role-play the process of asking an outsider questions from the bingo sheet, and following up the practice with a group discussion of rough spots, etc.

Performing the errands

Interactive errands maximize students' control and direction over their own learning experiences. In working on a human bingo project, for instance, students are able to approach potential signatories when and where they feel most comfortable doing so. They are free to ask people of their choice to sign their signature cards which allows them to proceed at their own pace from less-demanding encounters to others which call for initiative and pluck.

Furthermore, students are bound to do and learn more in the process of preparing for and performing interactive errands than simply finishing the relatively uncomplicated errands themselves. They may experience social situations and learn facts which otherwise would be slow in coming to them. It may become clear to them, for example, that when social conventions such as saying "excuse me" are observed, Americans are most likely to help them complete their tasks in a cooperative, friendly fashion.

By fulfilling the terms of an academic assignment such as a site visit or idiom search, foreign-born ESL students whose home environment is monolingual may gradually develop a desire and capacity to venture into English-speaking society on their own in the future. Because they incorporate speaking, listening, reading, and writing, interactive errands may contribute to students' holistic development.

De-briefing and skill adjustment

After completing an interactive errand, students are given a chance in class to share and describe their encounters. If they have conducted a community site visit to a library or hospital, for example, they might present an oral report to the rest of the class. At this point, instructors can gauge how difficult the errand was in practice, to what degree different students displayed a spirit of adventure in carrying it out, and how much students actually learned from the errand. Following up this classroom procedure with an interchange in the weekly written "dialogue journal" circulated between students and their instructors is another way for the benefits of an interactive errand to be identified and consolidated.

Conclusion

The process through which foreign-born students adapt to life in America has numerous components. It is within the power of a strong ESL curriculum to contribute substantially to at least three of these components: learning our language, understanding our culture, and finding out how the organizations and facilities of our communities can be used. If they institute out-of-class interactive language errands as a part of a comprehensive pedagogical program, we believe that ESL instructors will be well on their way to enhancing the communicative competence and contributing to the cultural adaptation of their students.

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I GOT MY B.A. BY SHEER LUCK, OR HOW STUDY SKILLS SAVED THE STUDENT

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD: I got my B.A. by sheer luck. I say sheer luck because, if events were ordinary, I would have failed almost every course. Instead, when things looked impossible, some "chance" idea pulled me out. Here is my story.

Professor Kolb (the students called him "King Tut") was especially rough that year. Some said that an editor had turned down his manuscript; others said that he was just tired of students. But whatever it was, exactly 63.6 percent of the class failed Egyptian History. And if it were not for sheer luck, I'd have raised the percentage to 65.4.

I remember most vividly the frightening pace of the lectures. No one could take notes as fast as "King Tut" talked, especially when he became excited. My frantic scribbling and almost indecipherable abbreviating were so slow that I missed more than half. Without complete notes, it was impossible to study. I was lucky to have gotten even the 38 on one exam. As the fellows used to say, the "handwriting on the 'sarcophagus'" was clear for me. I knew that my only chance for survival was to get fuller notes.

That night after the exam grades came out, I tried to fall asleep—to forget my devastating grade for even awhile—but words like "hieroglyphics" and "rosetta stone" kept kaleidoscoping and rolling through my mind. As I mulled over my missing more than half of each lecture, I suddenly hit upon an idea: Why not leave every other line on my note paper blank? Then during the following period I could recall the lecture and fill in the missing portions. In deference to the ancients, I called this the "Osiris Plan."

The next day I tried the "Osiris Plan," and it worked! What luck! At first it was difficult to recall the lecture, but as days passed, it became sort of a game. Often, in the privacy of my room I would, in softer voice, imitate the old professor and try to redeliver the lecture as best as I could without looking at my notes. This mimicry almost got me into trouble, when, on a rare occasion, the professor called on me to answer a question. Stunned by being called, I jumped to my feet and for the first two sentences, before I caught myself, the fellows said I sounded "exactly like Old Tut."

One evening while quietly reciting the day's lecture to myself, I made an important discovery. In trying to make my presentation as smooth as possible (about this time I had begun imagining that I was a lecturer), I used the transitional words "Now that we have discussed the major reason for the phenomenal success of Pharoah Hophra, let us look at the subsidiary reasons." At that moment I stopped still, for at no time did the professor ever cut up the lecture into topics and subtopics; nevertheless, the topics and subtopics were neatly packaged and embedded into the seeming onrush of words, waiting to be perceived by the student. With this secret in mind, I found that I could take better notes during the lecture, and during the periods after class I could very easily supply the missing portions, filling in the blank every-other-line.

I tried to share this find with other students, but they'd always say, "You're foolish to take all those notes. Just sit back and listen." Although this sounded too easy to be good advice, I was struck by the great intelligence of my fellow students who could remember the main ideas of lecture after lecture, just by listening. I knew I couldn't; so to hide my inferior intelligence, I continued taking notes, completing them directly after class, categorizing the ideas, supplying titles and subtitles, and reciting the lectures.

Another incident finally convinced me of my intellectual inferiority when I found that the other students just "flipped the pages" of the textbook. But poor me, I had to work on each chapter for hours. It was only luck that I wasn't found out, because the professor never quizzed us on our reading; everything depended on the *final* exam. I was luckier still when looking in the library stacks for a book on Egyptian religion I ran across an entire shelf filled with books on Egypt. I spent the rest of the day until 10:00 p.m. (closing time) perusing this lucky find. I finally picked out three books which were written in a style easy enough for me to understand, and I took these back to my room. By first reading these extra books, I found I could come back to the assigned chapter in the textbook and understand it better. I noticed that the author of our textbook frequently referred by footnote to these library books. So with luck I solved the textbook problem.

Well, all of this simply led up to the final examination. There I was with a notebook, about two inches thick, filled with lecture notes. Now, was I to memorize all these notes for the exam? And the textbook? Realizing that I didn't have the brains to memorize everything in my notes, I decided (this time without Osiris's help) to read each lecture bearing one focusing thought in mind: "What is the really important idea here?" As I found the answer, I'd jot this central point on separate sheets which I called "Summary Sheets." When I finished, I had "boiled" down inches of lecture notes to just twelve solid pages of "main issues." I then did the same with my textbook.

Thus armed, I aligned the "Summary Sheets" so that the main issues for both the lecture and textbook synchronized. I learned these main issues by first reading them over, thinking about them, reflecting on them, then without looking at my notes, by trying to recite them in my own words. I went through my summary sheets in the same way, issue by issue.

I guess that I had played the role of the professor too long, because after having mastered these main issues, I composed ten questions--questions that I'd ask if *I* were the professor. Still having some time left, I pretended that I was in the examination room; and I spent the next four hours rapidly answering my own ten questions. I then corrected my answers by referring to the lecture and textbook notes, and much to my delight, I had discussed all the facts and ideas accurately. For the first time I felt that I had achieved something. I felt almost adequate. But the warm glow was short-lived. What if the professor didn't ask what I had staked my life on? Well, I thought, "It is too late to change." With the feeling that my luck had really run out, I half-heartedly studied for six more hours. I went to bed at 10:00 for a good night's sleep, having refused to go to the second show of a "relaxing" movie with the rest of the boys.

On the way to the examination room the next morning, I knew without question that my luck had run out when I met Jack, who sat next to me. He had not taken a single note all semester; he had not even gone through the motions of "flipping" the textbook pages. When I asked why he wasn't nervous, he answered, "This is the semester for Examination Set #4, the one dealing with dates, names of pharoahs, dynasties, battles, and so forth."

"What's Examination Set #4?"

Everybody on campus except me, I guess, knew that old "King Tut" had five sets of examinations (ten questions in every set), which he rotated over a five-year period. Though "King Tut" collected the mimeographed questions from each student, he did not reckon with the organizing ability of fraternity students. The plan worked like this: Specific students were given the mission to memorize question #1, another group to memorize #2, and so forth. When the students left the examination room, they jotted down these questions quickly from memory and put them into the fraternity hopper. In this clever way all five sets of the examination found their way into the files of numerous students.

I knew then that even Osiris and Ra, put together, couldn't help me. I had studied relationships.

The room was hot, yet others complained of the cold. My mind reeled. I knew my luck had run out. Dimly, as the examination sheets were passed up each row, I heard successive moans of various kinds: "Oh, No!" "No!" and occasional uncontrolled, almost hysterical laughter. I thought that perhaps the professor had by mistake given out Exam #5 instead of the anticipated #4.

By the time the sheets reached me (I always sat in the rear corner of the room where it was quieter) I, too, involuntarily gasped, "Oh! It can't be." I closed my eyes and waited for my vision to clear so that I could read the ten questions. They were the same ten questions that I had made up only yesterday--not in the same order, but nevertheless, the same ten questions. How could that be? One chance in a million, I'm sure. How lucky can one get? I recovered my composure and wrote and wrote and wrote.

"Old Tut" gave me a 100 plus. He penned a note saying, "Thank goodness for one good scholar in all my years of teaching." But he didn't know the long line of luck that I had, and I never told him.

Now that twenty years have passed, I think that it is safe to reveal that here is one fellow who got his B.A. just by sheer luck.

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RESTRUCTURING FOR INNOVATION

In a recent issue of *Business Week*, the dean of a mid-western business school says, "We teach the things that experience has taught us will be valuable to (students) in running a business. We do not try to teach them creativity or risk-taking." This is a disheartening pronouncement to those who value creativity. In an atmosphere of management that stresses specialization, standardization, efficiency, and quantification, creativity may be seen as being too risky and expensive. After all, how can a manager be creative when the mission of management is to reduce risks? How can a manager be creative when short-term goals are emphasized to the detriment of a long-term view? Given these circumstances, it could be true that creativity is not viewed as being "valuable."

Can we learn creativity?

Harrison Gough, Director of the Institute of Personality Assessment and Research at the University of California-Berkeley, suggests three ways to view creativity. First, we can see the creative person as being mad, or nearly so. Or, second, we can see the creative person as being essentially disconnected from the act of creativity. Finally, we can see creativity as a possibility open to every person; as an expression of personality that may be highly developed in some but which is present in everyone.

If executives see creativity as either madness or mysticism, and many of them probably do, they will not want many creative people in their organizations, no matter how great the need may be for innovation. On the other hand, if executives see creativity as a possibility to be developed in everyone, then the question becomes not whether creative people should be encouraged in organizations, but how we can develop the creativity that is already there. The difference is one of generative creativity—the in-born creativity of an artist or scientist—and applied creativity—creativity that can be taught and developed. By seeing creativity as a resource that already exists in their organizations, waiting to be developed, executives may be able to reconcile the need for innovation with the need for conservative, low-risk management styles.

How can organizations tap creative resources and make them useful and profitable? One way is to reduce organizational "certainties." In other words, to nurture innovation and simultaneously watch the bottom line means an organization should provide the "triggers" to stimulate creativity, as well as the "certainties" necessary to produce a profitable product.

Triggers

What might some of these creativity triggers be?

Sabbaticals, long a strategy of academia, can be used as a weapon against "burnout."

Another possible trigger is the trading of executives and managers; he or she would bring fresh perspectives and skills to the new job.

Being given early freedom and responsibility for a project of some importance could trigger creativity in a company's new managers. William Ouchi, in *Theory Z*, gives an example of this in Japanese industry. When one firm is faced with a major decision, the task of laying out the one best solution for consideration is assigned to the youngest and newest member of the department involved. Although this young manager obviously would like to come up with a recommendation acceptable to the boss, "the young person cannot completely figure out from others what the boss wants, and must add his own thoughts. This is how variety enters the decision process in a Japanese company." And variety, if it is consistently sought, can lead to innovative solutions.

Incubation and illumination

These are three possible triggers that organizations might consider for encouraging applied creativity in their organizations. If they sound a little far-out, it may be because we are accustomed to structuring organizations primarily for the *preparation* of solutions and decisions, and for their *verification*. But preparation is only the first step, and verification only the last step, of a four-step process of creativity that was suggested by George Wallas in *The Art of Thought*. The full process of creativity begins with *preparation*, during which all data are gathered, analyzed, and studied, and alternative solutions are suggested.

These are tasks for which our organizations are well suited. Preparation, however, should be followed by *incubation*, during which the problem is allowed to bubble, and the alternative solutions studied in the preparation phase are allowed to bump against one another. For this phase our organizations are not well suited. And according to Wallas' theory, if you can't let the problem incubate, you are unlikely to arrive at phase three, *illumination*—the Eureka! of the creative process. Perhaps by not providing structure for incubation, our organizations are encouraging mundane solutions—low-risk maybe, but not very high in potential either. Wallas' final step in his description of the creative process is *verification*—a test of the idea's pragmatic value. Here again, as for the preparation phase, organizations are well equipped. So it's the vital incubation/illumination stages that we seem to ignore in structuring our organizations.

A climate of creativity

A sense of the value of innovation has to permeate the organization. Michael Lombardo has suggested five things organizations can do to create a climate favorable for incubation and illumination:

- **Buffering**. Executives can look for ways to absorb the risks of innovation. Obviously this takes the pressure off the potentially creative manager and puts it where it perhaps really belongs.
- **Organizational Time Outs**. Send people away from the office to work on a problem. Remove the aura of gold-bricking from time spent just thinking.
- **Intuition**. Give half-baked ideas a chance. Act on intuition occasionally. Take a flyer. Even if you lose, at least the air gets charged and people know that ideas are valued, not fatally prejudged.
- **Innovative Attitudes**. Encourage everyone in the organization to think of ways to solve problems they encounter in their work. Encourage them to ask *why*; to think: There must be a better way.
- **Innovative Organizational Structures**. Provide new employees, especially managers, with diverse role models and mentors. Let them get a feel for the entire organization, and encourage them to feel a responsibility for the well-being of the entire organization.

Ideas for increasing the chances for innovation in an organization are not hard to find, and many of them are fairly easy to implement. Recently we asked a group of managers to list some ideas for making innovation a part of their organizational culture. Here are some of their ideas:

- Top management can make it clear to everyone that the organization wants to be innovative.
- Keep highly innovative people in the organization by eliminating the management track as a necessity for advancement. Add a high-creative track for development and advancement.
- Create an innovation ombudsman to assure that all ideas get a fair hearing.
- Create idea teams to tackle special problems.
- Use the media to publicize the organization's commitment to innovation.
- Introduce training programs in innovative problem solving and creative thinking.
- Set up hot lines between divisions for quick communication on problems.
- Arrange in-house creativity conferences and briefings.
- Encourage people to attend professional meetings, not only within their fields but in fields that are even tangentially related as well.

If these ideas seem inconsistent with organizational life as we know it, maybe it's because our organizations have been structured to avoid the perceived risks of creativity and creative people. Innovation is a proven problem solver, and as we restructure organizations for innovation, it can become the management tool of the future.

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PRECEPTORSHIP: IT REALLY WORKS!

History and Purpose

Preceptorship! After four years this term is now a "household" word at Red Deer College. The program—a rewarding experience for students, college instructors, and hospital staff—is a final clinical experience where on-the-job learning is individualized through a student's relationship with a preceptor.

The preceptorship program arose to facilitate learning in the final course of the nursing program. Preceptorship—a learning method to aid in the prevention and ease the impact of reality shock—allows students to be exposed to the realistic view of nursing while still a student. Both nursing education and nursing service are concerned with the disillusionment and frustrations of new graduates as they enter nursing practice. The preceptorship concept provides a link between service and education.

Description of a Preceptor

A preceptor is a nurse who is a positive role model and a clinical expert—someone who is competent in the clinical knowledge and skills required for practice in her area. Facilitator, teacher, observer, and evaluator are terms used to describe a preceptor. She must be able to establish sound interpersonal relationships, generate and examine alternatives, seek assistance from others (exhibit problem-solving skills), give both positive and constructive feedback, and must want to teach students and facilitate their learning.

We request that the preceptors have been employed by the hospital for a minimum of one year, to ensure that they can function as resources around hospital philosophy, policy, and procedure interpretation.

Planning

Initially, we planned the program, set out tasks and timelines, and developed a handbook explaining the components of the practicum course and preceptorship. We hosted a tea for all the involved agencies. We met with head nurses, directors, and assistant directors of nursing to outline the proposed program and obtain initial feedback. To our surprise and joy, we received immediate support and approval.

A student/preceptor handbook was also developed which included course information and the various evaluation forms. We met with the head nurses to assist them in matching the students with the preceptors.

We met with the students to distribute the student/preceptor handbooks, to describe the program, to request their learning objectives and asked them to meet with their preceptors prior to commencement of their experience. The purpose of the meeting between students and preceptors was to allow them to become acquainted and to review the learning objectives.

Workshops for preceptors were conducted to establish the functions, roles, and communication systems of students, preceptors, and instructors; to identify potential problems and methods of resolving these problems; and to clearly establish expectations of the evaluation system.

We attempted to predict problem areas—such as, personality differences, disparity in values, and communication difficulties. We encouraged open communication and discussion between student and preceptor, but agreed that intervention by a college instructor would be made to resolve any debilitating conflicts or situations (e.g., the extended absence of the preceptor).

A skill inventory list—common procedures which the student was expected to perform competently—was developed to help meet individual student objectives. The student and preceptor were required to review the inventory together and then plan assignments and experiences that would provide the greatest number of learning opportunities.

Implementation

The first preceptorship program began in May 1982. Students had developed learning objectives for the clinical areas they had chosen. Preceptors had attended an orientation workshop and had met with instructors to determine communication lines and times. Meetings between preceptors, students, and instructors were scheduled on individual bases.

During the course of the program, the *students* reported feeling a part of the unit team and gaining insights into the functions of team leaders, head nurses, and unit secretaries. The *preceptors* were seriously committed to their new role, examined their own skills, studied and carefully evaluated student progress.

The unit staff welcomed the students and worked hard to maintain an exemplary standard of nursing care. We were encouraged to see our students grow in self-confidence and independence and to witness rapport and caring between student and preceptor. Instructors worked flexible hours to accommodate meeting with students and preceptors working various shifts; aside from scheduled meetings, we worked on an on-call basis.

The evaluation system included questionnaires to be completed by both students and preceptors. Evaluation of the clinical experience and of preceptors was completed by the students. Both students and preceptors were asked to complete weekly progress notes, illustrating the student's ongoing performance. A summary evaluation of the student was completed by the preceptor. An evaluation tool was designed to collect data related to the evaluation system itself.

Evaluation

The overall feedback was positive and supportive of the program. *Students* identified consistent, direct supervision; continuity of learning and evaluation; a decrease in anxiety and an increase in confidence; and a realistic approach to nursing as key elements of the program. They felt respected and accepted as part of the nursing staff. They described the program as well organized and a valuable learning experience. Most students felt that the evaluation system was fair, accurate, and immediate and that it provided for the necessary feedback on strengths and weaknesses. The only criticism from students was that completing weekly progress notes was too time consuming.

The *preceptors* identified a greater continuity in teaching as a program plus. Most felt it had been a rewarding experience. They found the students to be less stressed, more secure, and better able to build self-confidence. Many identified the program as vastly superior to the prior practicum experience. Some preceptors felt that the weekly progress notes were necessary as they identified areas where the student could improve and provided an ongoing means to evaluate an experience. Others found them difficult to complete initially but easier over time with assistance from instructors. Preceptors in specialty areas identified the need for forms more directly related to their specialties. One preceptor thought that the grading system needed to be more definitive so that excellent work could be clearly rewarded.

Since the beginning of the preceptorship program, graduates of our nursing school have listed the preceptor course as one of the strengths of their nursing program. From our experiences, we make the following recommendations for future programs:

1. that one college instructor carry over from one year to the next to provide liaison and planning continuity;
2. that preceptors receive more information on evaluation writing;
3. that a mid-session conference be held for preceptors and students to discuss "how things are going"; and
4. that preceptors meet to form a support group to share thoughts and feelings on being a preceptor, discuss the positive rewards of the role, and share problems and methods of resolving them.

Summary

After four years we still believe in the preceptorship concept. Our rationale has been supported by the positive feedback received each year from students and preceptors, as well as from hospital personnel, in relation to the new graduates' higher level of assertiveness, maturity, and clinical competence.

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EXTENSION TEACHING: NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND OLD INSIGHTS

Just over one year ago, I returned from sabbatical to find that my role now included a hefty dose of extension teaching—specifically, a plane trip each Tuesday into a community some 350 miles away. I would prepare for class for part of the morning, leave to catch the plane at 2:30, arrive at 6:00 to teach three hours, and arrive home between 12:00 and 1:00 a.m. The assignment took all of one day and sapped my energy for the next. My efforts at using the travel time effectively, by grading papers or writing, were only marginally successful. The compensation was the interest and appreciation of the class. When a teleconference course delivery alternative appeared, I was an enthusiastic volunteer.

The COMNET System

Last night, I finished teaching my first course on the COMNET system. I taught a class of 29 students, all but three of them at one of five remote locations in Utah and Wyoming. As presently configured, our campus system includes two-way audio communication, an electronic blackboard, and a slow scan video camera. All communication is carried over two dedicated telephone lines, a feature mandated by the high costs of current satellite video technology. An instructor can teach simultaneously from any one of the eleven sites to students at the other ten. Instead of requiring 12 to 15 students at any one location before a class can be offered, this system allows a class to be composed of as few as three students per location. From an institutional cost standpoint, the system is less expensive than the airplane delivery, although to date the planes still fly to three major rural teaching centers. The new system pays an extra third in honorarium to the instructor, without requiring that he or she leave campus.

From an instructor standpoint, you teach as usual, but with some adaptation. When you ask a question in class, you do so by name or by location, asking that people identify themselves as they respond. When students have a question, they push their press-to-talk switch to signal you, the instructor, to acknowledge the question at an appropriate stopping point. When the instructor writes on the chalkboard, students see the message immediately on a video monitor at their site. A second television monitor is used for the slowscan video, which takes a still picture but requires 32 seconds for the digitized image to be transmitted. Generally, these images are of the instructor, and are changed every 2-3 minutes; but they can also transmit a transparency, a cartoon, or pictures of class members from a particular site. If you as instructor can overcome a certain self-consciousness at seeing still images of yourself and can time the jokes on your transparencies with a 32-second delay in the punchline, you can probably succeed.

Crucial Features of the System

Some crucial features of this system are not readily apparent, but are highly important. For one thing, the system is interactive, allowing question and answer interchange, sharing and probing. If the class becomes a monologue, with a straight lecture, it can become very boring. The technician at each site has a vital role—ensuring that the equipment functions properly, collecting and distributing assignments, tests and the like. At first, these technicians were recruited with minimal skills and paid minimum wage. A couple of quarters of operating experience with COMNET showed that this person needed maturity and if possible, training in teaching. Now, whenever possible, a certified teacher is employed. Because the instructor cannot monitor the nonverbal cues of class members and the technician can, a working relationship with this person is vital. A final feature of teaching involves group dynamics with the on-campus class to ensure that they receive no special advantages over students at remote sites. Because the on-campus group has visual contact in a way that the other sites do not, care must be taken to keep them from dominating discussions, receiving more immediate feedback on assignments, and so forth.

The technology of the COMNET system has some "special effects" worth mentioning. A special thermal printer at the university classroom allows rapid printing of the still video image, for example allowing an instructor to receive individual photos of the student in the class. All class sessions are recorded and the tapes maintained for 2-3 weeks before erasing. When played back, the tapes show all video images, all writing on the blackboard, virtually everything that happened in class. A student who misses class can

Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin, EDB 348, Austin, Texas 78712

experience the entire session, minus the interaction. A final element, soon to be included, will include a rapid scanning and printing device, allowing printed material to be sent immediately to or from each particular site. Right now, the delay in feedback on assignments and tests sent through the postal service is a major problem.

Keys to Success

I have found this quarter's teaching over COMNET to be challenging. I found that a "free writing" assignment at the beginning of class allowed students to use the time productively while I handled the small details of class logistics. I used group presentation assignments throughout the course, fifteen minutes maximum per group, to involve students and to vary the presentations. Some presentations were dry, but most were stimulating and well done. Students generally came prepared with excellent examples and well prepared visuals. Sometimes they encountered the same frustrations with the slow scan video delays that I had experienced. I believe that giving students the chance to present eventually built rapport between us. I was interested in what they had to say, and so, I believe, were their classmates at remote locations.

Some of the keys to successful work over COMNET are important in any form of teaching, only amplified by the new system's demands. Advance preparation is a must, allowing time for materials to be produced and distributed prior to classtime. For the first time in teaching the communication course, I put together a student workbook, complete with handouts, worksheets, and important visuals. When I have taught the course on campus, these materials have been distributed as needed throughout the quarter. The course over COMNET was more structured than before, a feature which should carry over into future classes. I found that having a good text, assigned readings, and assignments done outside of class were important. I found it helpful as a strategy to expect that most of the course content could be presented outside of the class, with class time used for discussion, questions, and synthesizing. Class time could thus be much more relaxed, and yet more meaningful. Attention to correcting written work, thus providing periodic feedback, is also crucial. Prompt return of student work is the problem we all face with our on-campus classes, except that the need for rapid response is greater, while the apparent pressure from the class is diminished. I have a bundle of assignments yet to grade, a reminder that I have progress to make personally in becoming more methodical in my teaching.

Evaluation

Currently, on our campus, the system is getting mixed reviews from faculty. Instructors appreciate the time savings and the extra pay, but they fear that critical elements of teaching may be lost. Some see COMNET teaching as too impersonal: "When I teach, I have to see the expressions on peoples' faces. Without that, teaching isn't worth it." Others worry about student attention: the story is going around our college that one professor, while visiting a remote site, was surprised to hear the voice of a colleague coming over the COMNET system. Looking into the room, he reportedly saw a vacant classroom. The students had apparently all gone home.

We have some copyright problems to solve—e.g., increased cost and time. The dispersed sites created the need for multiple copies of some tapes, the payment of special fees, and the requests for special permissions. As a result, we have had to rely more on locally produced materials and sometimes have omitted components which would have enriched the course.

All in all, the quarter has been a challenging one, balancing the demands of COMNET teaching with all the other requirements one faces. My first impression of COMNET, the first time I tried it out, was that I was teaching in a swamp, up to my waist in mud, but trying to present an interesting and animated class. I take a more positive view of the system now, having learned a few tricks and having had some positive feedback. But this system represents a new world of extension teaching, and the technological changes are only beginning.

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EVERYONE'S SECOND CHOICE: FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AT YUKON COLLEGE

Situated North of 60 degrees and created in March, 1983, Yukon College is one of Canada's most northerly and youngest post-secondary institutions. As recently as three years ago there was little that distinguished the college from the Yukon Vocational and Technical Centre, the twenty-year old "voc school" it had replaced. The college had inherited its buildings, its programs and its staff. What the college didn't inherit from the old school was its new, ambitious mandate; as the sole post-secondary institute in the territory, the college was charged with the delivery of post-secondary vocational, technical and academic programming to the Yukon's adult population. This meant that the college had to find ways to deliver all the programming traditionally available through community colleges to the 16,000+ adults who live in the sixteen communities spread out over the 482,415 square kilometers that comprise the territory. In other words, in 1983 the college was faced with the intimidating, some would say preposterous, task of providing programming to a population considerably smaller than the daytime population of The University of Texas at Austin but spread out over an area almost the size of Texas!

How? What was quickly realized was that the college, if it were to fulfill its duties, would not only have to construct new buildings but refurbish the old ones; it would have to hire new faculty but more importantly help existing faculty acquire credentials more compatible with the new mandate of the college. It was specifically towards this end that in 1984 senior administration went shopping for a suitable professional development program for college faculty.

The program they sought had to meet certain basic criteria. It would have to be flexible enough to meet the diverse needs and schedules of the participating faculty. Thus, the entire program would be offered locally and on a part-time or continuing education basis (programs requiring a residency or full-time attendance wouldn't be useful). It would have to be credible; if faculty were to benefit fully from the program, it would have to carry university credit and be recognized by institutions outside of the Yukon. It would have to be accessible, not just to faculty with university experience but also to those who were hoping to acquire their first formal credentials. It would have to be relevant; time would have to be given to practical, local issues as well as more abstract, theoretical ones. It had to be of manageable size; a lengthy degree program taking years and years of part-time study would intimidate rather than challenge. It had to be economical; again, the program would have to be delivered locally if the high costs of sending faculty out of the territory for training were to be avoided. But, above all else, the college wanted something that would bring its people together in a common enterprise—a program that dealt with the issues and concerns of teaching adults.

What became more and more obvious was that if the program was to be useful to a wide range of college faculty it would have to be "everyone's second choice." That is, the student counselors would have ideally wanted master's or doctoral programs in Counseling Psychology; for the trades instructors perhaps a bachelor's degree in industrial education would have been most suitable; university transfer instructors wanted advanced academic programs at the doctoral level; administrative-minded people would probably have preferred an M.Ed or doctoral program in Educational Administration. Clearly, most faculty members' first choices were appropriately specialized programs of great interest and use to themselves. But, and this was just as obvious, they would be of little or no use to other faculty. Furthermore, these first choices would necessarily mean faculty going their various merry ways. Also, such specialized programs would result in *huge* expenditures in time and money, resources that really ought to be used to expand college services to the community. For all these reasons, then, specialized programs of study weren't what was needed. So the college decided on everyone's second choice—a one-year program of senior undergraduate work with an appropriately broad emphasis on the methods, not content, of teaching adults (the University of British Columbia's Diploma in Adult Education).

The plan was simple. Each fall and winter term the University would offer one course. For each, an instructor would fly up to Whitehorse for four intensive weekend sessions. Classes would begin Friday evening and continue through Saturday. The instructor would then be available for consultation until his/her plane left Sunday afternoon. Additionally, each summer the University would offer two courses consecutively. For these, however, instructors would make only one extended visit and, as a rule, teach for a two- or three-week period. During the summer, then, students would be able to choose one or both offerings depending on their other commitments. Using this model, courses in the personal and social development of the adult, instructional techniques for teaching adults, community practice of adult education, and course design soon followed.

What became obvious almost immediately was that this was *adult education for adult educators*. Relevancy was insured; ideas put forward in class could not only be immediately tested in the college's classrooms but in the classes of the diploma program itself. Also, because busy professional schedules were involved, weekend and summer session programming was especially favoured. Participation in the program was positively reinforced; tuition was waived for those who taught at the college, regardless of status. In many cases, time off was provided. Faculty were encouraged to discuss and were permitted (tsk, tsk) to produce papers and projects using college resources. In turn, much useful instructional material was produced at modest cost to the college.

As hoped, the fact that the program was comprised of senior undergraduate coursework in Adult Education insured appropriate depth and breadth of study while avoiding the onerous demands of graduate research, on the one hand, and the "slightness" of non-credit "hands-on" workshops or institutes, on the other. It has also maximized participation; of the thirty to forty people who register for each class, about two-thirds are college faculty.

Thus, at modest cost, the college has provided a forum, close to but still removed from the hustle and bustle of daily responsibilities, in which college faculty and other educators from the community can objectively examine themselves, their philosophies, their profession, their students and institutions. Here—in an environment where politics and egos can be, at least for the moment, put aside—faculty can ask what they ought to be doing for their community and what their community can do for them. This forum is essentially interdisciplinary; currently, all programming areas as well as student services and administration are represented. All the participants bring their special knowledge and skills to the program. We have a nurse, a lawyer, two carpenters, a university English teacher, an alcohol and drug counselor, a college counselor, a drafting instructor, a surveyor, general public school teachers, social workers and social work instructors . . . the list seems to go on *ad infinitum*. Thus, on more than one occasion, a "problem" in one area has been solved by a "solution" from another area. With each offering, the collegiality—the collaboration—has increased to the point where students are looking for ways to extend their involvement, to strengthen their programs. The "dialogue" has expanded to the point that it has spilled over into coffee breaks and lunch hours.

Now, one year since the first course was offered, critical mass has been achieved. By and large, people are bringing as much energy and information to the program as they take from it. Therefore, when one instructor wasn't as strong as he ought to have been, the class was able to sustain itself through student presentations that ranged from a critique of Paulo Freire to a new model for program evaluation. Even the instructors seem to find the experience of coming north to the wilds of Canada invigorating. They too seem willing to contribute more than they perhaps normally would—seem eager to become "students" and acquire what they can in the way of new knowledge, new insights. Indeed, it does seem that everyone's second choice was about the best choice possible.

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THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH PROJECT

How can the community college instructor generate student interest in research assignments? Term papers, book reports, reading lists, and other similar projects generally lead to a last minute student effort and many hours of agonizing reading for the instructor. In an effort to overcome some of the difficulties associated with student research, I have developed an instructional approach for my general sociology course that exposes students to the practical application of the scientific method. Using a simplified version of the method and its five steps—(1) stating the problem, (2) designing the research framework, (3) collecting the data, (4) analyzing the data, and (5) drawing conclusions—I have been able to convert past student apathy into a newly-found enthusiasm for research.

Initially, I require my students to choose a problem related to the college community and design three hypotheses that can be empirically tested. For example, a student may want to measure school spirit as related to campus activities, library usage as related to daily commuting distance, study time as related to academic success, use of school eating facilities as related to food selection, or some other relevant topic. After spending one or two class periods on constructing hypotheses, I meet with each student on a one-to-one basis and ensure that his or her hypotheses are measurable and fruitful to pursue. We discuss the potential problems and pitfalls of each hypothesis and then mutually agree on the one to be tested.

With the statement of the problem and the selection of the hypothesis completed, I now direct the students into the second phase of the research project. This phase involves testing the hypothesis by employing all five steps of the scientific process and using hypothetical data. Prior to testing, however, the students must choose a research design that will best suit their project. Typical choices might be systematic observation, survey, experimental and statistical control, or comparative analysis using secondary data. I strongly encourage them to choose the design that is most suitable for their project and can be handled in a semester's time. When one is finally chosen, they proceed to collect, analyze, and draw conclusions from hypothetical data. The purpose for using hypothetical information is two-fold: (1) to give them a chance to perceive what they think the results will be, and (2) to enable them to go through the entire scientific method and become familiar with all its steps. The hypothetical data requirement is crucial to the project's success, and I will not permit any student to move into the final phase—the testing of the hypothesis using actual data—until he or she clearly understands the procedure.

Moving into the final phase of the project, the students collect, analyze, and draw conclusions from actual data. When the hypothesis is not supported by the data, it must be redesigned. This third phase represents the culmination of a semester's work. For the first time, they are able to see the true results of their efforts and objectively state their findings, and I strongly caution them to stay within the scope of their project when stating the results.

The final phase of the research project may also yield an additional reward to the more motivated students. For instance, these students may desire to compare the perceived results of the second phase with the actual findings of the third. How close were the predictions? Did the perceptions differ greatly from the realities? Answers to these and other questions bring the research project to life. The comparison also adds to the challenge and the uncertainty of the exercise, not unlike that encountered by professional researchers.

Generating student interest in research assignments can be achieved. This simplified approach, coupled with instructor imagination and content modification, has worked for me and may offer excellent possibilities for application in other social science courses.

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TEACHING THE PHILOSOPHY OF SUCCESS

Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the curriculum, here is another subject that needs to be taught in our schools and colleges. The recent dominant trend has been "back to basics," putting more emphasis on English, mathematics, and the sciences, while reducing the number of trendy electives. I believe, however, that we need to add a strong and coordinated effort to teach about the philosophy of success.

What is the philosophy of success? Television news programs have carried stories about visits by the **Reverend Jesse Jackson** to schools, many of them inner city schools. In these emotional speeches, one of the central features is when Jackson urges the students to repeat after him, "I-am, some-body." The students join in, and repeat the words, and then repeat them louder. Jesse Jackson is teaching about the philosophy of success. A philosophy of success is a system of concepts about personal achievement; it attempts to understand and explain how success works, and what one needs to do to be successful. There is, of course, no single philosophy of success. Different writers, philosophers, and achievers have varying views on the subject. However, there are considerable common threads in their thinking.

A philosophy of success is usually founded on the idea that we become what we think about, and includes attention to the effects of positive mental attitude, the importance of goal setting, the role of perseverance, and faith in a Greater Power. Many of these concepts are not new to the curriculum of colleges. For example, psychology courses teach that people tend to fulfill their self-concept, and management courses teach about the self-fulfilling prophecy. However, these ideas are not taught in the context of an integrated philosophy of success, and more importantly, they are presented as theories, and not personalized with application to the daily life of the student.

How would schools and colleges teach about the philosophy of success? The philosophy could be taught on two levels. First, we can have courses dealing directly with the subject. There is a considerable body of literature that can be read, analyzed, absorbed, and discussed. In such classes, students would have assignments that not only insure that they understand the concepts, but also would provide exercises and assignments to help incorporate the lessons into students' lives. Such classes can be conducted, with appropriate content, at all levels from elementary school through graduate school. As with most subjects, students can have a different and deeper level of understanding as their age and maturity grow.

Second, the more difficult but more powerful teaching medium is for the philosophy to be woven through all of the subjects taught at the school or college. Students must find evidence of a philosophy of success in their teachers and administrators; they must see it working and learn it from role models. In the teaching of writing, we have learned that we cannot teach writing effectively if it is only taught in English class. Other teachers must include writing assignments and must stress the importance of sound principles of grammar, coherence, and logic in their classes as well.

If we really want to stress the basics in the curriculum, we will point ourselves toward teaching the philosophy of success. It is *more* basic than English, mathematics, and science; because if we do not help students to learn the attitudes and skills that will enable them to succeed, they will not be able to achieve in English, mathematics, and science. Once students have learned the facts and the reasoning skills to succeed in the basic subjects, their sense of confidence and direction will propel them toward the ultimate goal of education, to help them make a difference in the world.

James D. Tschechtelin, Executive Director
State Board for Community Colleges

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STUDENTS AS SCRAMBLED EGGS AND OTHER RECIPES FOR TEACHING

I was standing in the kitchen, preparing breakfast for our overnight guests. Gary slipped up behind me, observed for a moment, and said, "You're bringing those eggs along very nicely . . . ."

"Just like students," I replied, almost without thinking.

"What do you mean?" Gary asked.

"Well, you have to apply just the right amount of heat and stir them intermittently and gently—otherwise, you get an omelet. And you don't let them get completely done in the skillet; turn them out on the plate at the right time and let the heat within them continue the process," I said, warming to the topic.

The amusement showing on Gary's face only spurred me to continue.

"It's not just the teaching—uh, cooking process, either. You don't just drop the eggs into the pan, cook them for three hours, and eat them with salt and pepper (shells and all), as a first-grader might prescribe. First, you crack them into a bowl, add just a bit of salt and help break down the albumen, add milk if you wish, then beat them to an appropriate state of uniformity."

Thus was born the idea of students as scrambled eggs. It was one of those rare instances where one's subconscious produces a spontaneous response that lingers on to acquire considerable significance. The more I reflected on that morning in the kitchen, the more my mind conjured up cooking metaphors for teaching.

I treated some of my students like roast prime rib. I applied a lot of heat for a short period of time at the beginning in order to seal in the juices. Then I reduced the temperature to about 275 degrees and completed the process slowly, ensuring a high degree of tenderness.

There's room for creativity in teaching as well as in cooking. Just as I introduced a delightful tartness to apple pie by including a generous portion of cranberries to the filling, on occasion I introduced a new ingredient in the classroom—always making sure to balance creativity with judgment. My willingness to innovate in the kitchen encouraged me to innovate in the classroom. The students ate it up.

Often, I found that the addition of one additional ingredient became the critical element which turned an everyday dining (learning) experience into a very special occasion. Just as a touch of all-spice "made" my several creamcheese spreads for apples, I spiced my classes with the unexpected ingredient. For example, in probability demonstrations, instead of using dice I used astragali (sheep heel bones), the original "bones" used by ancient Egyptian gamblers. (Being on good terms with the local butcher comes in handy in a lot of ways.)

New and unlikely combinations sometimes produce tasty dishes. Inspired by a mundane peanut butter and celery snack, I developed a dip for fresh vegetables made from sour cream and peanut butter (augmented with crumbled bacon, minced onions and other appropriate flavors)—it's become a classic. My new-found creative courage in cooking extended to the classroom, where, for example, I mixed a Carnac-the-Magnificent act with calculus to illustrate that integration could be considered a matter of finding the questions to which the derivative was the answer.

In the kitchen, there were times when I had to substitute ingredients. Having no ground almonds and Mexican chocolate´, I used peanut butter and unsweetened cocoa to turn my sauce for chicken into a respectable mole´. Having no tart apples, I made an outstanding Dutch pie from green tomatoes. Likewise, in the classroom, I used jars of M&M's in a sampling distribution experiment when I could not afford a standard set of colored marbles. (And, the students were able to consume the data at the end of the exercise!)

For a long time I pondered about my associating food with teaching, two things which do not seem to have a natural relationship. Finally, it dawned on me one morning at breakfast: teaching and food are the two primary things that provide sustenance for a teacher. From food we get energy and satisfaction. No less do we draw energy and satisfaction from teaching. What teacher has not experienced that vibrancy of joy and energy at the end of a class that has gone particularly well? It's what keeps us striving toward excellence.

Furthermore, producing a good meal involves blending ingredients, contrasting sweet and sour, attending to the arrangements of elements and timing. All of these considerations are part of the creative process of teaching, too.

Well, the analogies between the kitchen and the classroom kept coming to mind, many more than I report here. Once I got started on it, I couldn't seem to think of anything else. Then one day I got to talking over the fence to my neighbor about it. He looked up from his gardening with a perverse twinkle in his eye.

"Now that you've mastered the art of how to cook students, do you suppose you could turn things around and think about how to teach vegetables?" he asked, in deadpan seriousness.

That broke the spell. I am no longer so obsessed with the cooking-teaching metaphor. But, I'm still willing to share a few academic recipes with my friends so that they, too, may savor the results of creative efforts in both kitchen and classroom.

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EFFICIENT MEETINGS ARE SHORT MEETINGS

Several topics, popular in college coffee break conversation today, are connected in ways not always obvious to the casual observer. Certainly, budget cuts are a very real threat. Lack of enthusiasm about the new computer tools available in academe is dismaying to those who are versed in the subject. Communication problems get a lot of attention. And—perhaps the most frequent complaint among administrators—everyone agrees that too much time is spent in meetings.

All of these topics are closely related. Suppose that a college president has a coterie of seven deans and five directors reporting to him, and suppose that they meet on a weekly basis, along with a secretary who takes notes in order to publish minutes. Further, let's stipulate that the average salary of the deans is $45,000, the average salary of the directors is $30,000, and that the president's salary is $75,000. The secretary's salary is stipulated at $15,000. If their meeting lasts for three hours, the cost of the meeting in terms of resources spent is approximately $801, plus the costs of the secretary's typing time for minutes, the extra electricity, the coffee and snacks, and so forth. The truth is that most meetings do not produce results worth expending approximately $800 of a limited budget.

Most corporate managers agree that a meeting lasting longer than an hour is usually counterproductive. Two hours generally indicate diminishing productivity, often with the same points being belabored repeatedly. Three hours usually indicate negative productivity. The hypothetical meeting described above, in addition to being costly in terms of the salary levels involved, took more than 42 hours of work time, resulting in considerably more cost than the original approximation of $800.

Relate this to the communication problem that so many of us perceive in the education business: often one leaves a long meeting with a sense of relief at its end, but no feeling of accomplishment or of knowledge gained or shared. In many cases, a short written memo can convey much more information than a drawn out meeting.

I would like to share a technique that I have developed recently, which accomplishes the tasks of reducing meeting length, reducing meeting frequency, improving communication and dissemination of information, and putting to use those nice little personal computers that are beginning to show up in administrators' offices all around the educational industry.

STEP 1. A detailed agenda of topics for discussion is circulated in advance of the meeting. [It helps if some of the topics can be worded in such a way as to evoke a smile or two—being in a good mood about a called meeting is not a bad way to start. An example might be found in mentioning that state employees cannot be paid twice for the same day's work, as in taking paid professional leave in order to stage a seminar for a state agency for pay: "Double Dipping and Those Awful Auditors."] Leave the agenda in computer storage or on a disk.

STEP 2. Shortly before the meeting, bring the agenda back to your screen and annotate it. Briefly summarize the meat of each issue to be discussed, and parcel out assignments as needed. My technique is to do the agenda in boldface ("letter quality") lower case type, and the annotation in light ("draft") upper case type.

STEP 3. After indoctrination, occurring at the first meeting in which this technique is used, your meeting participants will read the agenda in advance; the first time the technique is used, they may require a few minutes to read it over. When the groaning about the length of the agenda begins to diminish, pass out the annotated agenda.

STEP 4. As each agenda item comes up for discussion, the meeting participants can respond very quickly to it. The relevant information is before them, and they are saved the task of "taking notes." Often (at least more often than in other meeting formats) there will be no discussion of an issue—the annotation provides the necessary information; and if it is well done, the item is understood. If discussion and/or action is necessary, it can be tackled more directly. Keep notes of such discussion and/or action for Step 6.

STEP 5. When the agenda has been exhausted, give each participant an opportunity to bring up individual items or to seek information from you. Keep records. After this step, adjourn the meeting (1) with more accomplished in less time than is usually accomplished the old way and (2) with a feeling among the participants that even academe can enter the 20th century.

STEP 6. The final step is critical. When you get back to the office, call up your annotated agenda again and edit in the major discussion thrusts, the actions taken, and the items entered by the meeting participants. This can be done in a contrasting form, such as lower case draft type, for ease of comprehension. Having finished this, distribute copies to all participants and the meeting is history. And you have your set of topical minutes to file or post. Your participants are back on the job, *doing* those things that you would still be talking about if you had followed a more traditional format.

My Chairpersons include some crusty, "let's do it instead of talking about it" types; and they are enthusiastic about the improvement in communications, the reduction in nonproductive meeting time, the fresh minutes, the practice of what we traditionally preach to students—use of the new technology to save time and effort, and the saving of the unmentionable—*money*.

One additional wrinkle augments this format for short meetings. Rather than spend interminable time discussing matters which are really only information distribution, and rather than writing an infinite series of memoranda, one for each information item, a weekly newsletter can be published for the chairs and perhaps for general posting. This newsletter, best done by adding information to a dedicated disk as the information comes in, carries routine items such as deadline dates, conference announcements, items of general interest, etc. Participative cooperation is augmented by inviting announcements or information for the newsletter to be submitted by any faculty member or staff person. In our great state, the newsletter is an interesting way to spread the latest Aggie joke, or as a rejoinder, the most recent A&M-UT football score.

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IS IT WIZARDRY OR MAGIC? WHAT MAKES AN OUTSTANDING TEACHER?

Over the past year and a half, we asked new adjunct faculty at our community college to help us determine the qualities of really outstanding instructors. It is not unusual for community college part-time faculty, particularly in the technical areas, to have had limited or no previous instructional experience. So at the beginning of each term we host an orientation program where we talk about instructional skills, in addition to disseminating the usual nuts and bolts kind of information.

We begin our discussion of instructional skills by asking these new faculty to reflect on the instructors they themselves had during their first two years of college. First, we ask them to indicate the **number** of instructors they feel were "outstanding" or "poor." Then we ask them to describe the **characteristics or qualities** of the instructors they rated as "outstanding" and the instructors they rated as "poor." Of course, we're using the questionnaire and ensuing discussion as a tool to help the faculty focus on the process of instruction, and to help them solidify their own instructional approaches and plans. But we are also interested in the long-term perspective—we want to know what really stands out—what we remember over the long haul about the really good (and the really poor) instruction we have received. It's one thing to review instructional evaluations conducted at the end of the semester in which the instruction occurred; it's another to ask people to recall their experiences of ten, fifteen, twenty or thirty years ago.

So, what did we discover? On average, our new adjunct faculty remembered two "outstanding" instructors from their first two years of college—or about 15% of the instructors they had had in that time period. On the other end of the scale, they remembered, on average, about three "poor" instructors. Not a very large percentage in either case, but maybe that shouldn't surprise us since we were asking people to "pull" out the exceptional folks.

Their descriptions of characteristics of the college instructors which they had rated "outstanding" covered a very wide range of personal and professional characteristics—the "top 5":

1. knowledge of subject
2. well-organized
3. concerned about and responsive to student needs
4. enthusiasm for subject
5. friendly and personable

Now take a look at the "bottom 5"—the five characteristics which distinguished those teachers rated as "poor":

1. dry, dull, cool, aloof, no personality
2. unorganized, not prepared
3. disinterested, uncaring, disrespectful toward students
4. not knowledgeable about subject
5. unable to communicate effectively

True, there were other comments—about absences, being late for class, inappropriate exams, inflexibility and other teaching issues. But the fact that the opposites of the "top 5" characteristics consistently showed up in our "bottom 5" list seems to support these major skills and characteristics as critical to being, and remembered as, an outstanding instructor.

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AN EFFECTIVE APPLICATION OF THE ELECTRONIC SPREADSHEET PROGRAM IN PRINCIPLES OF ACCOUNTING

Computerized practice sets and the like have been available for some time, but a more recent form of computer application which publishers are introducing with increasing frequency involves the electronic spreadsheet program. The spreadsheet "templates" (predesigned spreadsheet files stored on a disk) published with many accounting texts are normally designed to quickly provide solutions to some of the end-of-chapter problems. The student enters the relevant figures from the problem into the appropriate cells of the spreadsheet, and the solution is instantly displayed. These applications do serve to acquaint the student with the spreadsheet program, but they can often be criticized for their failure to adequately teach the underlying procedures which were applied to obtain the solution. This article describes a spreadsheet exercise created at Highland Community College which clarifies and complements course material while also introducing students to the spreadsheet program's operation.

Budgeting has traditionally been a difficult area for both instructor and student, and it is here that the electronic spreadsheet can be used as a very effective teaching aid. The master budget is composed of a sales budget, inventory purchases (or production) budget, selling expense budget, general and administrative expense budget, cash budget, and capital expenditures budget, and together they determine the balances reported on the projected income statement and balance sheet for the budget period. The interrelationships between these component budgets are complicated, and the process of tracing through them to analyze the effects of a change in some budgeted amount is the kind of tedious, demanding work which students find frustrating and confusing, and which instructors find difficult to present. Consequently, students often learn the steps required in preparing the component budgets, but fail to understand the significance of the master budget in planning future operations.

The instructional power of the spreadsheet program lies in its ability to allow students to *effortlessly* use the budget to analyze the effects of future contingencies. It is only necessary to go to the appropriate spreadsheet cell and change the budgeted figure. The computer instantly recalculates the master budget, eliminating the "busy work" that otherwise interferes with an understanding of its crucial importance in the planning process. Also, because spreadsheet programs were originally developed to facilitate the business budgeting and planning process and are still most directly associated with this use, their application in the budgeting section of the class arises as a natural and appropriate extension of course material.

As the exercise has been used at Highland, students first prepare a simple individual cash budget for a three month time horizon, and in the process learn how the spreadsheet operates. In the second, more extensive part of the exercise, students are given a disk on which is stored as a spreadsheet file the master budget which was developed as an example in the body of their text. The text's budget was used because students will have already become familiar with it, and because the text can then serve as a reference source which describes its construction in detail. An accompanying handout presents a realistic situation in which the company faces several financial constraints. Students, who act as financial analysts employed by the firm, use the spreadsheet (1) to determine the effects of several possible future events on net income and the constraint variables and (2) to analyze the effects of possible corrective actions which might be taken if the events should occur.

This has proved to be a particularly effective application of the spreadsheet program, generating very favorable responses from students. Many comment that it is both "fun" and enlightening to see how accounting information is used in planning, and that they have developed an appreciation of the importance of accounting in business management.

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TANDEM TESTING

The great American myth has it that success comes to those singular-minded, hard-driving individuals who force their way to the front of the pack. Students who survive a competitive educational system, who surpass all the barriers from admission to exams to graduation requirements, must be presumed to have the advantage over the less competitive (though perhaps no less able) peers over whom they leapfrog. But for some time social psychologists have maintained that cooperation is the key to success in any society. Recently the business world has beheld with admiration the success of the Japanese "Theory Z" methods, the essence of which is cooperation. James Coleman, in an article entitled "The Children Have Outgrown the Schools" (*Psychology Today*, February, 1972), has emphasized the importance of education's task of turning out responsible, productive persons who can effectively participate in cooperative situations.

Providing opportunities for cooperation in the classroom is not a new idea. Group projects are a common instructional approach, and there is a body of literature emphasizing the benefits. Peer instruction and study groups provide evidence of the gains to be made. But what about student cooperation in testing?

In most classes, that would be called cheating, but in my classes, we refer to it as collaborating. The procedure is simple: two students are given one copy of the test. They hand in one answer sheet with both their names on it, thus getting the same grade. Scoring is done immediately following the test to allow the pairs to examine any missed items. The pairs are formed by the students. Some pairs "bond" and test together through a three-quarter General Psych sequence. Other pairs are less stable. I encourage students, if they feel a partner is not pulling his/her weight, to find a new partner; but pair stability is the norm.

I began using tandem testing with one class in the summer of 1980, but it has been so well-received by students and so effective that I now use it in all my classes. Classroom atmosphere on test day is relaxed. A murmuring hum fills the air, punctuated by an occasional laugh. I can see the students' involvement with the material; in an attempt to persuade the partner of the correctness of an answer, one student may refer to something "she wrote on the board"; another student may cite a certain section of the text—they are actually *teaching each other* while taking the test! One student catches another's misinterpretation; one team arrives at a compromise: "We'll put my answer for number 6 and yours for number 24, okay?"

Each test provides evidence that my aim of fostering cooperative skills is yielding results. *Communication skills* are honed through struggles to express one's ideas to a partner. *Efforts to influence* one another range from "I don't know why, I just think my answer is right" to detailed explanations and examples. *Development of trust* follows the experience of going along with the partner, in doubt or in confidence, and getting the item right. *Conflict management* styles emerge through practice, as both partners must agree on a single answer.

Predictably, the students love it! In response to a brief questionnaire given to 103 students in my spring 1984 classes, 67 percent reported lower test anxiety with tandem testing while 15 percent said their anxiety level was higher. Seventy-eight percent reported the same amount of study time, 12 percent said they studied more, and 13 percent reported studying less. (In discussing the questionnaire, one student volunteered that she studied less because the support of her partner allowed her to abandon her compulsive over-studying.) Effect on grades: 53 percent believe their grades are higher with this system, 40 percent see no effect, and nine percent felt their grade was lower. I plan an analysis to check statistically the accuracy of the students' perceptions.

Asked what they saw as the greatest advantage of tandem testing, most students noted the reduced anxiety. The chief disadvantage cited was the problem of the unprepared student, either the prospect of being let down by your partner or the fear of not pulling your own weight. Some students noted that tandem testing takes more time, but my students manage 40-50 items in a 50-minute period without difficulty. One student complained, "It's hard to know what to do when you and your partner don't agree." Exactly what I want them to learn!

My teaching methods may not change the nature of American society or higher education, but I am convinced that my students are developing interpersonal sensitivity and collaborative skills that will serve them well.

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